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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

GENDER ROLE SOCIALIZATION IN A SELECTED PRESCHOOL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM IN NAIROBI, KENYA.

by

Anyango Joyce Onyango Odhiambo

©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN ECOLOGY

FAMILY STUDIES

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1994

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Anyango

P. O. Box 44640,

Nairobi, Kenya.

May 26th, 1994

Train a child in the way he should go,

and when he is old he will not turn from it,

Proverbs 22.6 NIV

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled: **Gender role socialization in a selected preschool educational program in Nairobi, Kenya** submitted by **Anyango Joyce Onyango Odhiambo** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**.

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May 26th, 1994

Dedicated to:

my parents Agnes and Zakayo Onyango for believing in me,

my husband Bosco Odhiambo for his love and support,

and,

my daughters Atieno and Achieng for their patience and understanding.

ABSTRACT

The socialization of young children into their gender roles constitutes a very important part of early childhood initiation into any society. The family has always been known to play the major role in gender socialization. However, with the social and economic changes that have taken place in Kenya since the turn of the century, there has been an increasing dependence on the formal school system for custodial care, as well as formal education. Through their daily interactions in the preschool setting, it was assumed that young children were socialized into their gender roles. This study was therefore designed to identify the process of gender role socialization within a selected preschool educational program in Nairobi, Kenya. This study also explored the social context in which gender role socialization took place.

This study was qualitative in nature, and data were collected through interviews, direct observations, and content analysis. Multiple data sources including parents, preschool, and a newspaper media were used to enrich the study, and to furnish perspectives from various social environments. The data collected were analyzed for gender-related patterns and themes associated with gender role socialization.

The findings of this study showed that the context within which gender role socialization took place among preschoolers in Kenya suggested a society in transition. Gender role values and expectations held by the family, the preschool, and the wider society manifested varying degrees of continuity and discontinuity between the environments. Within the family environment, participation, leadership, and responsibilities in various aspects of family life were determined along gender lines. In the preschool, the expectation of leadership and responsibilities emphasized the participation of girls in the academic field. In the wider society, the newspaper media portrayed a current trend of some female participation in more 'public' and traditionally

male-dominated roles. Learning processes like differential treatment, reinforcement and model imitation were instrumental in the process of gender role socialization within the preschool. Implications for the preparation of preschool teachers and for the preschool curriculum were discussed.

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CHAPTER I

Statement of the Problem

This study concerned itself with the process of gender role socialization as it occurred within a set of social environments in Kenya. Except for a few cross-cultural studies (for example, Bronstein, 1984; Williams & Best, 1990; Zern, 1984), literature on the gender socialization of young children is basically North American. Gender role socialization of young children in Kenya remains a neglected area of study. Certainly, the participation of Kenyan preschool teachers in the gender role socialization of young children has never been documented. Thus the purpose of this study was to investigate and document the role of the preschool teacher in the development of gender role preferences and stereotypes among preschool children. This study recognized the fact that the teacher's influence on gender role socialization was not an isolated part of development. The family has been known as the earliest socializing agent of the young child. Therefore, the contribution of the family to early gender socialization became a significant aspect of this study. In order to provide a more holistic picture, the cultural context within which the process of gender role socialization took place was also studied.

Background information

Socialization, or the process by which culture is transmitted to each new generation, encompasses the preparation for participation in social life. According to Mackie (1991), this process links the individual and society, as children learn the social group's current set of assumptions about reality. A lifelong process, socialization works under the influence of the prevailing societal norms and values. The process affords knowledge, skills and motivation to youth as they prepare for future social roles.

One of the ways in which social roles and expectations can be classified is by gender. Gender roles and expectations are transmitted to each new generation through the process of gender role socialization, where the individual learns societally endorsed feminine and masculine characteristics (Mackie, 1991). Through gender role socialization, individuals are expected to internalize specific social roles, and develop a relatively feminine or masculine self-perception in order to interact with those already in the society. They also learn to express gender expectations in their relationships, as well as engage in sex-typed activities. From the perspective of the individual therefore, the terms 'female' and 'male' carry powerful associations about what is expected of the person to whom they are applied. Individuals use the information provided by these terms to guide their behavior toward, and also to interpret the responses they elicit from other people.

Moving beyond the perspective of the individual to that of the society, gender has been recognized as an organizing feature of social life, and as "basic to the social order of all societies" (Epstein, 1988, p. 6). Throughout life, gender distinctions permeate most social relationships and spheres of human activity. The terms 'female' and 'male' are also used to create complex concepts with distinct guidelines for the activities of each individual. While the stereotyped concept of femininity is generally associated with expressive traits like warmth, caring and emotions, that of masculinity is considered instrumental in nature and reflects competence, rationality and self-assertion (Berk, 1991; Ruble, 1983). These concepts, when placed in a cultural context provide the basis for the social concept of gender, which is continually redefined in accordance with the ever-changing culture.

One particular characteristic of culture, or the way of life of a people (Hall, 1981), is that it is diverse. Cultural contexts take on the characteristic definitions of a particular group of people, at a particular period in time. In terms of gender, this means that the interpretation of the terms 'female' and 'male' are society-, as well as time-

bound. Although each society attaches its unique meaning to these terms, an extensive cross-cultural study of 30 societies determined that some gender expectations, like the expressive-instrumental dichotomy of females and males respectively, are characteristics of many cultures (Williams & Best, 1990).

Learning the characteristics of identifying with the female or male of a society involves the interaction of the learner with various social institutions. This interaction between human beings and the environment in which they live in represents the centerpiece of the theory of human ecology (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). Human ecology theorists identify several different levels of environmental systems which interact differentially and are determined on the basis of their immediacy or intimacy with respect to the developing person.

This study selectively concentrated on three different environments, the family, the preschool, and the wider society, that were assumed to contribute largely to the gender role socialization of preschoolers. The family was considered to be basic to the introduction of the concept of gender to the young child. Research done in this field indicates that family members, especially parents, treat daughters and sons differently (for example, Bronstein, 1984; Frankel & Rollins, 1983; McGuire, 1988). Although parents may not follow identical patterns of gender role socialization, an examination of child-rearing data from more than 100 societies has shown clear evidence of differential socialization of girls and boys (Zern, 1984).

The early impact of the family on the gender role socialization of the young child must be seen as a starting point for a life long process. In varying ways and to different degrees, other social institutions gradually complement the role of the family, and either intentionally or unintentionally participate in gender role socialization. One such institution, the preschool, formed the second environment or the focal point for this study. Although the contribution of the preschool to gender socialization has always been largely considered as unintentional, research has shown that the extent to

which young children are indirectly socialized into their gender roles within the preschool is significant (for example, Fagot, Hagan, Leinbach, & Kronsberg, 1985; Huston, 1983; Sadker & Sadker, 1987; Serbin, Connor, & Iler, 1979). Therefore through a variety of combinations of resource persons (especially the preschool teacher), and available material resources, preschools maintain or even intensify sex-typed behavior already fostered at home.

When considering the participation of the family and the formal preschool system in gender role socialization, one must continually bear in mind that these environments are embedded in the broader values, norms, and patterns of a particular culture. This wider society formed the third environment that was taken into consideration in this study. Through the wider society, a specific cultural context is determined. This cultural context is what gives gender its social meaning, which helps to construct a description of the world as it is. The resulting blueprint organizes and reflects a people's shared assumptions about "how things should be done" (Garbarino & Abramowitz, 1992, p. 27). Therefore, understanding the cultural blueprint against which gender socialization of the young Kenyan child took place became invaluable to this study right from its onset.

The context of gender role socialization can be understood by outlining the cultural settings, and the interactions within and among social environments which influence and determine the meaning of gender for the young child. However, socialization into gender roles involves a process of learning these meanings. The child's efforts to learn meanings and thus categorize things correctly is facilitated by modeling, reinforcement, and explicit instructions (Huston, 1983). Social learning theory provided a reference point for understanding the actual process in which the Kenyan preschool teacher contributed to the gender role socialization of the young child.

Significance of the study

Differential treatment has been associated with sex-typed interests and preferences among young children from a very early age (Bussey & Bandura, 1984; Carter & Levy, 1988). While this may be socially desirable for maintaining cultural equilibrium, these preferences may eventually lead to individual life options that are restricted by gender. Such a situation is not conducive to the development of a child to his or her fullest potential. As reviewed by Lips (1988), this scenario may pose long term effects on an individual's self-concept, behavior, mental health, and physical health, resulting in diverse societal consequences.

Although gender roles are considered essential to the continuity of societies (Abu-Laban & Abu-Laban, 1992), differential socialization that culminates in setting boundaries that shortchange individuals (and consequently the society) needs to be questioned. While this study is not intended to evaluate the role expectations placed on each gender, it is aimed at providing insight about a short but very significant chapter in the process of gender role acquisition of young children, between the ages of 3 to 6 years. This phase of gender role socialization is important because it is during the pre-school years that gender constancy or the appreciation that gender is a permanent characteristic of the self emerges. Therefore, it is expected that children are developing lasting impressions of gender expectations at this stage in life.

Research input into social and cultural constructs of gender role socialization among young children has diminished over the last few years, with most studies conducted in the 1970s. Although interest has gradually shifted to gender issues in later life, the foundational years and what is internalized during early socialization continue to play an important role in determining adult life options. Thus, this study is important in documenting gender role socialization in the contemporary social setting, especially in the wake of the social changes that have taken place in Kenya over the years.

Gender role socialization has not been studied within the formal school system in the Kenyan society. This study is therefore anticipated to provide a description of the role played by preschool teachers in gender role socialization within a selected pre-school setting in Nairobi, Kenya. It is hoped that such a description will create awareness of the contribution of the pre-school to gender boundaries set by the society for maintaining cultural equilibrium. To the extent that these boundaries are rigid, they may eventually shortchange not only the youth, but also the society.

The combined use of the human ecology and social learning theories make this study significant in providing a holistic picture of gender role socialization of the preschool child. Although the major focus of this study is on the process of gender acquisition, outlining the specific social context which influences the concept of gender expectations gives a unique meaning to this study. This acknowledgment of the wider society, the preschool and the family as working interactively to effect gender role socialization of the young child lends itself well to the qualitative approach of this study. Information thus gathered will go a long way in providing a basis for understanding issues concerning gender and society in Kenya.

Objectives of the study

This study had the following objectives:

1) to identify through direct observations with verification by interviews, the processes through which teachers socialize young children into gender roles in a selected pre-school educational program in Nairobi, Kenya; and

2) to present selected evidence about the current gender role expectations of the people of Nairobi, Kenya derived from interviews with parents of young children, and content analysis of newspapers.

CHAPTER II

Theoretical Perspectives

Gender role socialization, the central focus of this study, involves the processes by which individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that enable them to participate effectively as females and males within a particular society. The process of acquisition of socially acceptable feminine and masculine behaviors does not occur in social isolation. On the contrary, social learning such as that associated with gender roles takes place in a social environment, with the learner being an integral part of that environment. Therefore, it becomes imperative to determine the specific social dimensions that shape the environment in which gender behavior is acquired and which of these will be studied.

In this study of gender socialization among preschoolers in Nairobi, Kenya, provision was made to consider the prevailing social context or environment in which the child developed. The environments used included cultural norms and values of the wider society, and the family and the preschool which are more immediate environments. To accomplish this task, various concepts and assumptions from an ecological perspective were employed. Human ecology theory focuses on interactions within a person's environment that affect and influence his/her development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bubolz & Sontag, 1993).

Delineating dimensions of a social context in which gender socialization occurs enables one to study the process of acquiring or learning socially acceptable gender behaviors. While no special theories have been formulated to study gender behavior, Huston (1983) concluded that it could be approached by "the same mechanisms that apply to all kinds of social behavior" (p. 396). A major part of this study dealt with societal or environmental influences, including those of the family and school, and their contribution to gender role acquisition. Social learning theory, an approach that

acknowledges the active participation of environmental influences in social behavior learning, was selected to guide this aspect of the study.

Human Ecology Theory

Human ecology involves the study of mutual accommodation between an active growing human being and the changing properties of the settings in which the developing person lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1989). This approach looks at the progressive nature of these relationships, and the effect of these on the person. These settings include both the human and natural environments in which development takes place.

Much like the study of natural ecology, human ecology focuses on the interactions between subjects and various levels of the environment as they affect each other. Human ecology theorists recognize several different environmental contexts within which people develop. According to Garbarino and Gaboury (1992), contexts of development are "those regularly occurring environmental settings that can affect development by presenting risks and opportunities" (p. 4). These environmental contexts are conceived as nested arrangements of concentric structures, each contained within the next (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The proximity of each context to the developing person determines the nature of interactions that ensue. The immediate environments comprise those that directly affect the developing person, while those further away represent the larger physical and social milieu that have indirect effects.

From this theoretical perspective, the developing person is seen as a growing dynamic entity who progressively moves into and restructures the milieu in which he/she resides. Since the environment also exerts its influences, the interaction between person and environment is characterized by reciprocity. Recognition is also given to the fact that the environment defined as relevant to developmental processes is not limited to a single, immediate context. It is seen as extending to incorporate

interconnections between such contexts, as well as to external influences emanating from the larger surroundings.

Human ecology theorists have developed different conceptual models for studying human development (see for example, Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bubolz & Sontag, 1993; Garbarino & Abramowitz, 1992; Peters & Kontos, 1987). The differences in these models can be seen as the direct results of varying emphasis and classifications of environmental contexts. However, all the models rest on some core assumptions.

The first assumption is that all systems are defined by boundaries designed to restore equilibrium between the systems and the conditions outside them (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1989; Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). Through the process of feedback, the action of one system is influenced and as well influences the status of others. Systems are thus recognized as having continuous reciprocal relations with each other. The multidirectional quality of relations and influences within and between systems also contributes significantly to the systems approach. This quality takes into account the influence that one part of a system can have on several other parts simultaneously, a quality of human ecosystems. It further focuses on how movement in one aspect of an ecosystem reverberates, sometimes differentially throughout other aspects of the ecosystem.

This assumption specifies the interdependence of the person and the environment, the structure of environmental contexts, and the processes taking place within and between them. It also focuses on the dynamic interactive nature of the ecological system, alerting human ecologists to the kinds of interconnections which exist among component parts of settings. Nested within each other, the environmental contexts are perceived as constantly evolving as they interact and influence each other. Each person's development is thus affected by and affects those of other individuals or

groups of individuals. This assumption also stresses that development is profoundly shaped by larger societal forces such as history, culture, politics and economics.

This assumption plays a key role in this study of gender socialization. It enables us to place the child within the nested environments that represent real life settings in which the child exists. This assumption is also inherent in mapping the natural interactions which take place within and between systems and influence the child's acquisition of gender roles. It is assumed that these interactions allow for the transmission of gender norms and values among the environments and eventually to the preschool child. Reciprocal relations dictate that not only do the environments influence gender behavior, but also that the child's gender influences the nature of environmental reactions.

Human ecology theory is also based on the assumption that environments create unique ecosystems in which human development takes place. This second assumption asserts that diversity and pluralism between and within cultures are valid and defining qualities of life (Trickett, Kelly, & Vincent, 1985). Differences can be viewed as resources that affect the interactions between individuals and others, and individuals and their environment. Trickett, Kelly and Vincent (1985) outline these resources as being comprised of those skills, qualities, structures, or occurrences which can be mobilized in a specific community at a particular time to resolve community issues and enhance development. Therefore, cultural diversity and complexity of environments in which individuals live allow for differences in available resources and opportunities for the development of the individual and the community at large. For this assumption, the concept of adaptation is extremely valuable. This concept emphasizes the meaning of environmental conditions for varied groups, at varied times in history, and the ways in which individuals cope with, adapt to, and change these. This means that the ebb and flow of interactions among systems and the developing person that occur within

cultural boundaries manifest themselves in culturally unique developmental experiences.

This assumption of unique ecosystems allows for the meaning of culture as a way of life of a group of people to unfold. By not defining a rigid set of cultural norms and values, this assumption renders the theory of human development applicable to a variety of cultures. The norms and values of a particular society are then used to set cultural boundaries within which development is considered. These boundaries are usually set through defining the outermost ecosystem which influences all other environments. This assumption thus made the ecological perspective ideal for this study because norms and values from the culture of the people of Nairobi, Kenya were used to define the context in which gender development was studied. Defining this context set this study apart from others that have been carried out within other cultural contexts like North America.

The ecological model of human development elaborated by Bronfenbrenner (1979; 1989) influenced the ecological perspective of this study. Like others, Bronfenbrenner's ecological model pays attention to social environments in their many forms. This model also recognizes the active role of the individual in shaping as well as being shaped by social contexts. Bronfenbrenner's approach was found especially suitable because it focuses on the developing child within these social environments that make up his/her real world.

The ecological environment that influences human development was conceived by Bronfenbrenner (1979) as occurring in four levels, each nested within the next, with the child at the center (Figure 1). The innermost level next to the child, or the microsystem, consists of the activities, roles, and relationships that affect the individual's immediate settings and daily life. The family, the school, peers, and religious institutions form part of the microsystem. The microsystem level is characterized by dyadic relationships which according to Bronfenbrenner, should be

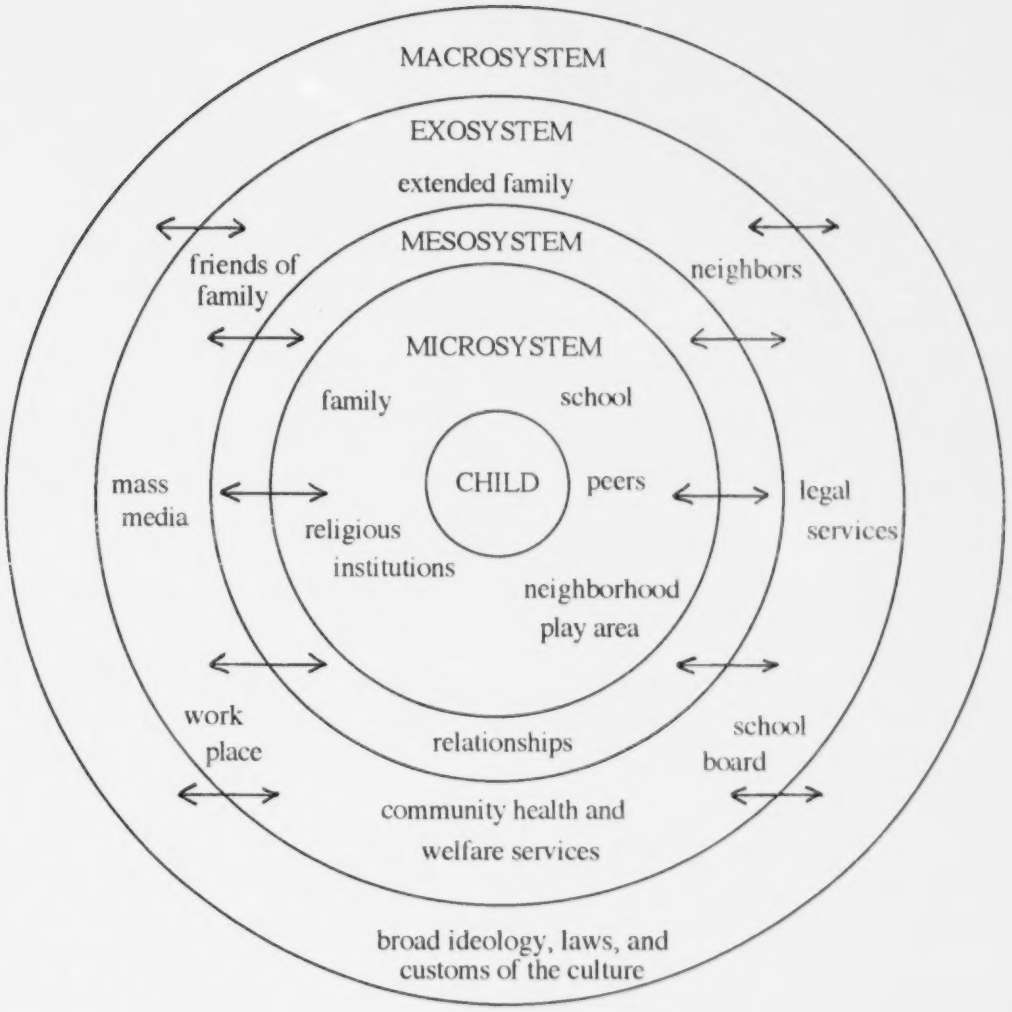

Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of the environment as a series of nested structures. (Adapted from: Child Development 2nd Ed. by L. E. Berk).

viewed as bi-directional and reciprocal. Since children's behavior is affected by those in the immediate setting, the impact of children's characteristics on the reactions they receive from others should be recognized.

The next level, the mesosystem, looks at the relationships among microsystems, such as home-school, or home-neighborhood relations. Bronfenbrenner argues that because of the impact that they have on the family, the interconnections among these single settings affect the development of the child. The third level of the ecological environment evokes the hypothesis that the person's development is affected by events occurring in settings in which the person is not even present. This level, known as the exosystem, constitutes powerful influences from institutions like the mass media, and other public agencies that make up the neighborhood and community structures that affect the development of the young child.

The final and outermost level is the macrosystem. The macrosystem, is comprised of the overarching ideology, values, laws, regulations, customs, politics, and economy of a culture. It provides the context in which all the other systems are set. This larger perspective fostered by the ecological approach makes it imperative that human development be understood in both its cross-cultural and historical contexts. This means understanding development in terms of similarities and variations across cultures and subcultures as well as over time. Although it is removed from the developing child, the macrosystem is seen as crucial in determining the experiences of children within the more immediate ecosystems of the environmental structure.

At this point, it is worthwhile to consider briefly the ecological model proposed by Peters and Kontos (1987). In their model which adapts and expands the perspective advocated by Bronfenbrenner, Peters and Kontos view four system levels of the environment as important. These include that of the person, and those of the microsystem, exosystem, and the macrosystem. In a departure from Bronfenbrenner's scheme, this model intentionally excludes the mesosystem level of the environment.

The mesosystem which represents a set of relationships between units or systems at the microsystem level, is equated to similar relationships that may be defined between units or systems at the exosystem or the macrosystem levels. Further, important relationships are defined not only within the systems, but also across system levels.

Since gender role development is a part of the overall development of young children, it can be studied within the perspective of human ecology theory. Under this theory, gender role development becomes part of the complex web of interrelationships that are prevalent in human ecosystems. Since human ecology theorists see gender role development as taking place in the social context in which a person lives, they consider events that take place at each contextual level as having an effect on children. Therefore, when studying gender role socialization, it is important to determine the social context in which this takes place, especially because these contexts vary between, as well as within groups of people. Determining the prevailing social context helps one to establish the gender related values and expectations that influence socialization, as well as the processes through which these are taught to young children.

Once the social context for gender role socialization has been established, then the actual process of learning gender expectations and behaviors completes the other aspect of this study. This process was restricted to the learning that takes place within the preschool. This process of social learning, which literally means "learning from others" (Crosbie-Burnett & Lewis, 1993, p. 537) was approached using the social learning theory.

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory has its emphasis on the importance of early experience in determining later behavioral patterns. This theory was initially launched by in the 1940s by adding a social perspective to learning concepts put forward by behaviorists like B. F. Skinner (Crosbie-Burnett & Lewis, 1993). Social learning theory explains

how children develop behaviors based on principles of learning: reinforcement, punishment, extinction, and imitation of models. In this theory, the systems of reinforcement and punishment are highlighted in their importance in the acquisition of specific behavior (Mischel, 1970).

Expanding on the work of early social learning theorists, Albert Bandura demonstrated the importance of vicarious or observational learning. This is the learning of new behaviors and expectations through the observation of others' behavior as well as any positive or negative consequences of the behavior (Bandura, 1977). Like changes in the field of child development as a whole, the focus of Bandura's recent work has become more cognitive. He, however continues to regard modeling, as well as expectation of reinforcement or punishment, as foundational to the performance of learned behavior and social development.

Social learning theory is based on several core assumptions. Probably the most basic of these is that behavior is learned (Crosbie-Burnett & Lewis, 1993). Limited only by genetic inheritance, and physical and physiological characteristics, this assumption indicates that human behavior is malleable. To this end, human behavior is seen as a product of environmental influences. Bandura (1986), postulates that a person's behavior can also act on the environment, thus affecting his/her interaction with members of the social environment. Therefore, behavior learning among young children can be seen as resulting from interaction between the child and the immediate social environment, or the microsystem, through the learning processes of reinforcement, punishment, imitation of models.

This assumption binds social learning theory to the ecological perspective discussed earlier. It emphasizes that one's learning and performance of behaviors are influenced by their social contexts, including the family, community, and the broader society (Crosbie-Burnett & Lewis, 1993). Thus in effect, the behaviors that are learned are influenced by the cultural context (macrosystem) in which the learning is taking

place. This larger context embeds other social systems including the family and the preschool which interact with each other, and also transmit cultural expectations of acceptable behavior to the learning process.

Indeed, when addressed to this study, this assumption proposes that the social context in which the preschool child exists has profound influence on his/her psychological processes, including the learning of gender roles. Thus, the inclusion of the several dimensions of environmental systems through the human ecology theory is imperative in determining the cultural norms and values that outline gender behaviors into which the young preschooler is socialized. The immediate environment, in this case comprising the family and the preschool is assumed to carry out the actual transmission of these gender expectations through distinct learning processes.

The second assumption is that an individual actively seeks, selects, and utilizes information in order to meet her/his needs (Crosbie-Burnett & Lewis, 1993). While placing emphasis on the active part of thought processes in behavior learning, this particular assumption asserts vicarious or observational learning (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Mackie, 1991) as a significant component of behavior learning. Behavioral patterns acquired through this form of learning, otherwise known as model imitation, are cognitively selected before utilization. Therefore, while all behaviors can be modeled and observed, only some are imitated. The choice to imitate behavior is largely determined by the characteristics of the model, as well as the observed consequences of the behavior. Although behaviors modeled by those considered to be admirable, powerful, or similar to the individual are likely to be sought and selected (Bandura, 1977), those that promise positive consequences are more likely to be imitated in meeting individual needs.

In the context of this study, this assumption plays a key role in the actual process of acquiring gender roles. The process of gender socialization has been considered in a cultural context, with constant interactions between the child and the

immediate ecosystems which are embedded in larger systems. It can therefore be argued that the macrosystem or cultural context determines the patterns of gender behavior exhibited by members of the microsystem, in this case the parents within the family and the preschool teacher. Through interaction with the young child, these persons model different culturally-endorsed gender behaviors. Through careful observation of the consequences of the behaviors for each gender, it is assumed that the young child will imitate gender-appropriate behaviors to meet his/her needs in constructing a socially acceptable view of reality.

The third assumption is considered by Crosbie-Burnett and Lewis (1993) as an extension of the second one. According to this assumption, individuals normally attempt to maximize rewards and minimize costs in all their actions. Rewards or positive reinforcement which include approval, praise, and/or a tangible recompenses, encourage particular and acceptable behaviors. Punishment and negative reinforcement, such as reprimands, disapproval, and/or withdrawal of privileges discourage the frequency of unacceptable behaviors (Mackie, 1991). Individuals are therefore portrayed as avoiding events, people, places, objects, and sensations that inflict punishment or unpleasantness, while engaging in rewarding experiences.

The relevance of this assumption to this study of gender role socialization of preschool children in Kenya cannot be understated. Various forms of rewards and punishment have been the mainstay of a number of studies on gender role acquisition among preschool age children (see for example, Eisenberg, Wolchik, & Hernandez, 1985; Huston, 1983; Katz & Walsh, 1991; Rheingold & Cook, 1975; Sadker & Sadker, 1987). Hence, one can assume that within the family and the preschool, rewards and punishments are commonly used in the acquisition of culturally determined gender roles. Therefore, the young preschool child is expected to internalize and engage in culturally appropriate gender behavior that will be rewarded, rather than in non-appropriate behavior that will be punished.

When applied to the area of gender socialization, social learning theory suggests that the child learns gender appropriate behavior either directly through differential treatment and a system of rewards and punishments for appropriate or inappropriate gender behaviors; as well as indirectly, through observation and model imitation (Basow, 1980). Those who ascribe to this theory claim that direct and indirect forms of gender learning interact with, and complement each other (Mackie, 1991). The degree of interaction depends on the nature of the behavior to be learned. Therefore, the young child is perceived as learning appropriate gender roles through the differential reinforcement of observed and imitated model behavior.

Theoretical framework for the study of gender role socialization

This study of gender role socialization utilized several assumptions from human ecology and social learning theories. The selection and combination of these were made to form the assumptions discussed below. The first assumption was that the developing person, in this instance the preschool child, was socialized into his/her gender role through a learning process that is influenced by a defined cultural context. This research concentrated its efforts on three dimensions of these environments, the family, the preschool, and the wider cultural society. These three were perceived as having very direct and profound impact on gender role socialization of the young Kenyan preschooler.

The preschool was selected as the major focus of this study because it was considered the earliest social institution, outside the family, that provides constant and elongated blocks of time periods in which gender socialization could take place. With preschool enrollment gradually increasing in Kenya, and the school day getting longer, young children spend relatively more of their preschool years in school as opposed to at home. The role of the family in gender role socialization was also considered significant because it is normally the first social institution that transmits to the child

gender related norms and values. The influence of the family also does not stop as soon as the young child enters preschool, but continues to influence the child even through the preschool years. Finally, the wider cultural context was studied in order to develop a sense of the gender expectations of the society. It was assumed that the culture influenced the norms and values that determined the gender behavior taught to the young children.

Another assumption that was made was that gender is a social construct, and like all other social behaviors, it is learned. This assumption allows for the use of concepts that are associated with learning social behavior and that emphasize the importance of environmental influence on the learning process. The concepts of differential treatment, imitation and reinforcement (rewards and punishments) of gender appropriate behaviors were used to examine the actual process of gender acquisition. Within this assumption, parents and preschool teachers (within the microsystem) were seen as the main models and reinforcers of gender behavior among young children. The assumption was that children were made aware of what was culturally appropriate and inappropriate gender behavior through interaction with parents and teachers. The gender of the child, as well as his/her exhibited behavior, could be seen as influencing the reaction they get from the parents and teachers.

Based on these assumptions a model was proposed for this study (Figure 2). In this model, the child remained central to the development process. The immediate environment, or the microsystem was defined as consisting of the family and the preschool, by virtue of the fact that these two dominate as major socializing environments during the preschool years. The actual process of gender acquisition (illustrated by the arrows), denotes it as a two way process. The influence of the microsystem on the child is however considered to be more direct because of the expectations of the wider cultural context. The assumption that all socialization does not take place in a vacuum, but within a cultural context, was in itself a justification for

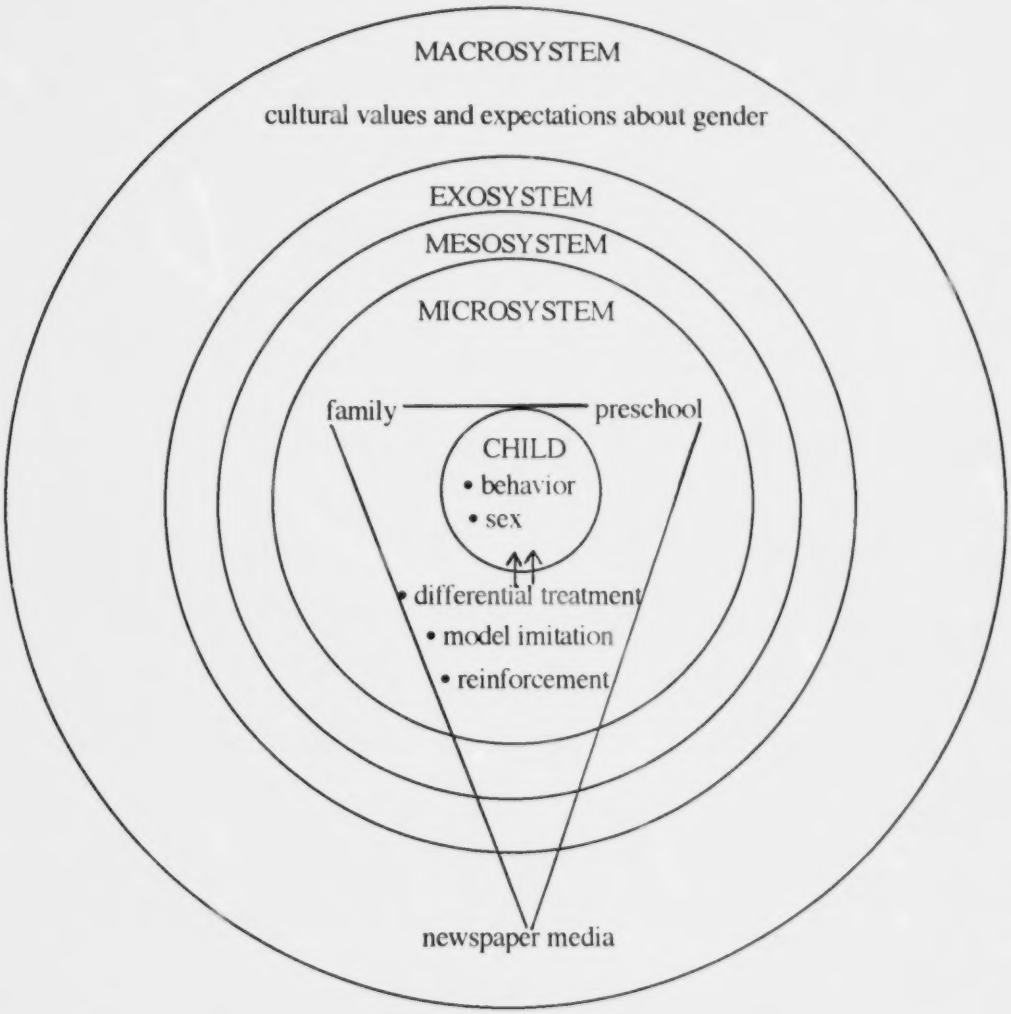

Figure 2. Working model for the study of gender role socialization.

including the macrosystem in this model. This system was defined here as determining both the content as well as the context of gender socialization of preschoolers in Nairobi, Kenya. It provided the prevailing societal gender role norms and values, that were crucial to this study.

CHAPTER III

Review of Related Literature

According to Milner (1983, p. 52), "social attitudes are made, not born". Thus attitudes which arise are communicated and sustained in human social life. Learning the business of social living involves learning skills, as well as social meanings that help to construct a description of the world. Gender is among the social meanings that are learned.

The meaning of gender is influenced by the cultural norms and values of the society. The learning process through which these gender meanings are acquired is referred to as gender role socialization. In this process, individuals learn the social blueprint of acceptable feminine and masculine behaviors (Mackie, 1991). Individuals also develop selfhood and acquire knowledge, skills and motivations that are associated with femininity and masculinity necessary for participation in social life. This process is usually marked by interaction between the learner and specific agents of socialization. The expectation of these agents of socialization, particularly those most significant to the child, are usually that the child will adopt clear and unambiguous gender roles.

The learning process that involves modeling, imitation and reinforcement, has been frequently associated with learning social behaviors, including gender. In the case of gender, this social learning process rests on the assumption that boys learn to be masculine and girls to be feminine because gender appropriate behavior is rewarded, while inappropriate behaviors are punished or ignored. This learning process also maintains that children learn gender appropriate behaviors by observing and imitating adult and peer models. In effect, socializing agents map out gender roles for the child, and then the child is differentially reinforced for following the appropriate model (Lips, 1988).

Learning and developing the meaning of gender, along the principles of social learning, has been the subject of a number of studies. The following review of literature looks at familial and preschool influences in the process of communicating and sustaining the meaning of gender among young children. The role of the wider society in determining the working meaning of gender will also be reviewed. This discussion will eventually lead to a consideration of the evolving nature of the Kenyan culture, as a prerequisite for determining the meaning of gender among the people of Nairobi, Kenya.

The role of the family in gender role socialization

When one considers the many ways in which gender roles are instituted, it then becomes easier to understand why gender differences in behavior emerge at such an early age. For the most part, gender role socialization starts at the family level. It begins with parents defining the child's world, explaining it, and drawing out its limits, as influenced by the societal norms, values and expectations. Children, on the other hand internalize this as "*the* world, the only existing and only conceivable world" (Milner, 1983, p. 54, emphasis in original). In the long run, this process of defining and internalizing the world, exposes children to the cultural norms and values of the society.

For the most part, the definition of the world for each child, is done along a set of social guidelines that are differentiated by gender. In defining each world differently, parents interact differentially with young children. Through daily interactions, parents explicitly or implicitly convey to their children gender appropriate and acceptable behavior. The influence of the family, and especially that of the parents on children's early gender role development, can therefore not be understated.

Starting right from birth, parents hold and communicate different expectations for male and female children. One study that involved interviewing 30 first-time

parents within 24 hours after childbirth, revealed that parents of boys and girls had already begun to view their infants differently (Rubin, Provenzano, & Luria, 1974). Infant girls were described by parents as softer, fine-featured, smaller and prettier. Boys on the other hand were described as bigger, stronger, firmer and more alert. Since objective measures of the size and health of the infants showed no difference between boys and girls, parental perception was attributed to gender stereotyped expectations.

Parental perceptions and expectations seem to persist beyond first impressions to the socialization process of young children. Few studies have concluded that parents do not treat their sons and daughters in a consistently different way (for example, Bee, Mitchell, Barnard, Eyres, & Hammond, 1984; Bellinger & Gleason, 1982). One study by Fagot and Hagan (1991) in which reactions of parents to the behaviors their children aged 1 to 5 years were observed, suggests that differential treatment is not consistent with all parent-child interactions. In their study, they found that parents were more likely to show sex-determined responses to younger children. Parents also responded more negatively to boys' attempts to communicate and more positively to girls'. Apart from those differences, Fagot and Hagan concluded that there were few consistent differences in the socialization of the two genders.

However, social expectations for sex-stereotyped behavior is evident in most families. These are manifested in the results of most socialization studies that have shown differential parental treatment of sons and daughters. Numerous studies conducted on parent-children relationships indicate that parents encourage (either consciously or unconsciously) stereotypical gender role behavior among their children (Caldera, Huston, & O'Brien, 1989; Lamb, 1980; Parke & Sawin, 1980; Power & Park, 1981; Smith & Llyod, 1978).

Bearison (1979), in his study of sex-linked patterns of socialization, found that mothers and fathers react differently to their children depending on the sex of the child.

He concluded that parents were more person-oriented in regulating the behavior of their same-sex child. With their opposite-sex child, parents were found to reinforce culturally stereotypic behavior through position-orientation or behavior regulations independent of personal consideration. In a similar study, Frankel and Rollins (1983) found that both parents were more performance- and task-oriented with sons, as well as more directive, approving and disapproving with them. With daughters, parents interacted in a more cooperative, concrete way, giving the girls more feedback about their performance.

Parents have been known to play or interact with boys and girls differently. In one study that was designed around children dressed neutrally and artificially labeled boys or girls, adults not only ascribed qualities that fit with the child's artificially assigned sex, they were observed to play in a 'masculine' way with the baby boy, and in a 'feminine' way with the baby girl (Stern & Karraker, 1989). Fathers have been observed to play with their sons differently than mothers play with either sons or daughters (Block, 1983). Fathers have also been known to be rougher and engage in more physical stimulation and gross motor play with their infant and toddler sons (Parke & Suomi, 1980). According to Tauber (1979), parents are more likely to talk with their daughters and to roughhouse and play actively with their sons.

Parents have been shown to reinforce differential sex-appropriate play by providing different toys for their sons than for their daughters, and encouraging them to develop sex-typed interests. Rheingold and Cook (1975) conducted a study of middle-class preschoolers' bedrooms. They found that boys' rooms were filled with sports equipment, toy vehicles, military toys as well as toy and live animals. Girls' rooms were more likely to contain dolls and doll-houses and to be decorated with floral wallpaper and lace. Fathers especially are more likely to offer sex-stereotyped toys to their children, both daughters and sons (Jacklin & Maccoby, 1983). Engaging in sex-appropriate play activities is further reinforced through positive reactions from parents

for such behavior (Fagot, 1978; Roopnarine, 1986). Negative reactions, especially from fathers, have been observed for children engaging in sex-inappropriate play (Langlois & Downs, 1980).

When it came to assignment of household tasks, parents were found to assign different tasks according to the gender of the child. In a study of household tasks performed by boys and girls between the ages of 2 and 17 years found that boys were mowing the lawn, shoveling snow, taking out the garbage, and doing other yard jobs; girls were cleaning the house, washing dishes, cooking, and baby-sitting for younger children (White & Brinkerhoff, 1981). In a related study on rural communities in Kenya, Kayongo-Male and Walji (1984) concluded that rural parents expected children to participate in several chores from as early as 5 years. All children were expected to participate in *shamba* (farm) work. Other chores like household work, fetching water and firewood and child care ranked high among the chores performed by girls; while the boys were reported to perform herding, harvesting, running errands and minor household chores.

Cross-cultural studies have also indicated that parents treat sons and daughters differently. Children's gender in fact appears to be a relevant dimension to parents in all cultures - a dimension that helps to shape parent-child interaction. Evidence of differential socialization of boys and girls comes from examination of child-rearing studies, for example, the one conducted by Zern (1984) in more than 100 societies. This research confirmed that although both sexes receive pressure in this direction, boys were more strongly pressured in the direction of self-reliance, achievement, and general independence than girls were. Bronstein (1984), similarly concluded that it is not uncommon for parents in different cultures to pay more attention to boys than to girls, to emphasize more achievement and autonomy with boys, while they interact more sociably with girls.

While families still remain central, several other social institutions are increasingly getting involved in the overall socialization including gender socialization of the youth. Among these is the formal education system. With the major function of preparing the youth for adult roles, "(schools). . . remain effective agents of social control, perpetuating the existing class, racial, and sexual divisions in our society" (Levy & Stacey, 1973, p. 105). Thus, the educational system inevitably provides children with messages about their roles as males and females.

The role of the school in gender role socialization

The role of the formal school in gender socialization can be considered in the broader sense as the part education plays to preserve and justify the gender status quo, with educational change and reform causing the same in society (Himelfarb & Richardson, 1982). In the narrower sense, the role of the formal school can be assessed through gender stereotyping in teachers' sex-typed treatment of girls and boys, gender stereotyping in curricular and textbooks, girls' involvement in mathematics, and lack of career information for girls. This study concentrates on the teachers' sex-typed treatment of girls and boys as a structural issue in gender socialization.

Resulting from the exposure to differential gender interactions within the family setup, it can be said that children enter the preschool having already developed some degree of sex-typed preferences and behaviors. In fact Richer (1979) considers children "very solidly entrenched before (they) even enter public school" (p.198).

While schools may have an intention of equipping children with skill-oriented knowledge required to fit into the adult society, it has been known to also convey important social attitudes and expectations of the culture of which it is a part. Although much of the impact of the school on the transmission of gender expectations is considered unintentional, studies have continued to show the school as an important

agent of gender socialization. Through provision of activities, reinforcement, modeling and subtler forms of communication, teachers within the school systems provide additional messages regarding gender role development. In most cases, these messages reinforce those received at home, strengthening the sex-typing.

The status of the preschool teacher is an important place to begin. Status is normally accorded to teachers depending on the particular age-group he or she teaches, with lower status being given to the teachers of young children. According to Deem (1978), this lower status results from likening the teaching of young children to child-minding. The teaching of young children (aged 3 to 7 years) is an area predominantly staffed by females. So entrenched are individual and institutional patterns of masculinity and femininity that working with young children is seen as a 'natural' occupation for women, while "men who want to work with (young children) must be 'unnatural'" (Aspinwall & Drummond, 1989, p. 15). Thus elementary school teaching remains largely a female domain.

Teacher behaviors communicate gender attitudes to children in many other ways. In preschool and early elementary grades, teachers tend to reward children of both sexes for feminine behavior (Fagot, 1981). Thus, teachers tend to accept quietness, obedience, dependence, neatness, and sober-mindedness over masculine behavior like bouncing about, questioning, being curious or aggressive (Howe, 1974).

Studies have also shown that teachers differentially reinforce social behavior among girls and boys. In their study of the interaction of teachers with young children in toddler play groups, Fagot and her colleagues (1985) noted that teachers' reacted to the children's social initiatives in terms of sex stereotypes. Although the teachers ignored assertive behavior in girls, they attended to boys' assertive behaviors by talking to them, giving them a new toy, or physically moving them. In contrast, girls' less intense social initiatives, such as gestures, gentle touches and talking, were responded to more often than the same behavior of boys. Observations made nine months after

the initial study showed clear sex differences in behavior, with the boys being more assertive and the girls talking more to teachers.

Studies have indicated that girls are often shortchanged in both quality and quantity of teacher attention. Serbin and O'Leary (1975) studied classroom interaction at the preschool level and found that teachers gave boys more attention, praised them more often and were at least twice as likely to have extended conversations with them. Serbin and O'Leary also found that teachers were twice as likely to give male students detailed instructions on how to do things for themselves. With female students, teachers were more likely to do it for them instead. This results in boys learning to become independent, girls to become dependent.

In many ways teachers have been known to provide cues that encourage children to notice and emphasize female-male differences. In an observational study in a kindergarten, Richer (1979) found gender to be a practical basis for organizing the children. Children lined up by sex virtually all the time when moving from one activity to another. Sex was also used to motivate participation in activities - "Who can do it the fastest, the boys or the girls?" (Richer, 1979, p. 201). He argues that such references served not only to accentuate further sex differences in the class, but also to put a negative value on behavior inconsistent with one's own sex.

According to research, boys in preschool and elementary school receive more disapproval, scolding, and other forms of negative attention than do girls (Huston, 1983). Huston argues further that teachers' greater scolding and disapproval of boys seem to result from their expectations that boys will misbehave more often than girls. Basow (1980) pointed out that boys not only received more punishment, but also more attention and praise from teachers. The fact that boys get more of their fair share of teacher attention is also supported by work done by Sadker and Sadker (1987), who concluded that boys dominated all classroom communication and participate in more interaction with the teachers than did the girls. Sadker and Sadker attributed this not

only to male assertiveness, but also to the teachers differential behavior in response to children's behaviors which seem to portray the message that "Boys should be academically assertive and grab teacher attention; girls should act like ladies and keep quiet" (Sadker & Sadker, 1987, p. 144).

The preschool studies reviewed above, illustrate that teachers participate in gender role socialization of young children. The role of the preschool teacher is manifested through gender-defined and differentiated interactions with the children. Through these interactions, the gender values and expectations of the teachers may either reinforce or discount those learnt within the family environment, or introduce new gender dimensions of defining the 'world' for children.

Gender and society

The family and the preschool are environments that influence the development of young children through interacting with them directly. According to the ecological perspective, these environments are a part of a larger picture of environments that are interconnected. Apart from the family and the preschool, the other environment that is significant to this study is the wider social environment that represents the culture of the people. The family and the preschool are set within this wider overarching social environment. Through constant interaction, the wider society influences among other things, the gender values and expectations of the family and preschool.

Gender is considered to be a central concept and a basic organizing principle of societies. Abu-Laban, McDaniel and Sydie (1992, p. 301) capture this essence by defining gender as "a socio-cultural definition based on sex status", with the particular expectations placed on one's biological anatomy differing among cultures and historical periods (Mackie, 1991). Gould and Kern-Daniels (1977) viewed gender as a continuum of norms and behaviors that are "socially constructed, socially perpetuated, and socially alterable" (p. 184). In effect, gender is determined and given meaning by a

variety of different socio-cultural components which specify some ways of behaving, feeling and thinking as appropriate for females, and other ways as appropriate for males. This makes culture important in setting the meaning of gender for each society.

Culture is defined by Hall (1981) as the way of life of a people, the sum of their learned behavior patterns, attitudes and material things. He further sees culture as a complex series of activities filled with both emotion and intelligence, many of which occur unconsciously. Culture includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. So deeply rooted is culture, that to most, it becomes the 'human' way of behaving, the 'natural', the proper and the expected. In fact any other behavior is likely to be considered as difficult, peculiar and unreasonable.

Culture is held together by distinctive norms and values. According to Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban (1992), norms are acceptable rules and expectations that specify appropriate and inappropriate behaviors in a particular society. Values refer to what is socially agreed as good, right or desirable. Norms and values are dynamic in nature, and represent products of people's adaptive responses to constantly changing life situations. Not only do they undergo a continuous endogenous process of change, norms and values are also very closely woven with economic and political systems of a society. Ultimately, they culminate in cultural beliefs that "evolve as practices deemed as necessary for survival and represent an organized blend of human effort, feeling, and thought" (Slonim, 1991, p. 5).

The place of cultural beliefs in the macro or larger environment in which people live in is astounding. Culture shapes the way of life shared by members of a population. It strongly affects attitudes, beliefs, values, and, in turn, behavior. In a sense, to understand culture is to understand learned behavior. There is little doubt that culture is filled with messages telling us how we should be and behave in order to be adequate or proper females and males. There is also little doubt that these messages

have an effect on us - that we believe what we are told. Our ideas about gender are intimately bound up with our culture and change along with it.

Through cultural norms and values, different societies emphasize different behavioral expectations for each gender. Therefore, although gender is basic to all cultures, it is seen to mean somewhat different things in different societies. While some cultures have highly elaborate complex notions of gender that regulate virtually all aspects of social life, others conceive gender as somewhat less elaborate, or important in defining everyday activities and social roles.

While recognizing the unique characteristics of any one culture, some common patterns have been reported. In many cultures, gender roles have always been decided along the division of labor, especially because this was in most cases linked with biological and physical sex differences. For the most part, the tasks of both women and men seem essential for the society's survival (Williams & Best, 1990). Even though activities in different cultures are not gender typed in the same way, a few distinctions seem to be virtually universal. The stereotype of male gender has usually been equated with instrumental and productive roles. For the most part, men are expected to work hard and provide for the material needs of their families. Meanwhile, the stereotype of female gender is considered to include expressive and socio-emotional roles. Women are expected to carry out the nurturing responsibilities of the family. Nurturing involves caring for children and other immediate as well as extended family members, and providing for their emotional and personal needs (Williams & Best, 1990; Zern, 1984). These roles are usually determined by social norms and values that depict gender expectations. Through gender role socialization, young children are taught to meet these expectations.

Much evidence shows that gender stereotypes are accompanied by evaluative judgments. Not only are males viewed as different from females; they are viewed as superior to them. According to literature reviewed by Lip (1988), the undervaluing of

work that is done by women is one of the obvious manifestations of such judgments. Lips concludes that while both women and men are subject to the restrictions of gender stereotypes, the males stereotype is viewed more favorably, while the female is the target of more discrimination.

Cultural gender role values and expectations impact on families and preschools through the interaction between the micro- and the macrosystem. Therefore, inasmuch as the wider society might not have direct influence on the gender role socialization of the young child, its values and expectations are transmitted to the child through more immediate environments like the family and preschool. In effect then, the micro- and macrosystems become significant environments for the gender role socialization of the young child.

The research setting: Nairobi, Kenya

Kenya is a developing country that is situated on the east coast of Africa, with a population of 24 million people. For a number of decades, Kenya has been undergoing socioeconomic and cultural changes. Trends towards the current Kenyan lifestyle were initiated as early as 1895, when Kenya became a British colony. With the British rule came relatively different social institutions like European religions and formal education (Otiende, 1990), modern health care centers (Sindiga, 1990), nationwide transportation and communication (Ogonda, 1990b), and inland settlement of both European farmers (Ogonda, 1990a) and Indian traders (Ndege, 1990). Since these initial changes, other factors, including high population, high inflation rates and economic debts, have contributed their share to socio-economic and cultural changes.

Kenya records a total of 42 different indigenous ethnic groups, each with unique cultures and traditional beliefs. While most of these ethnic groups are geographically located in different areas of the country, the introduction of foreign social institutions and the changes in the economic system contributed to the emergence

and subsequent migration to urban centers, and gradual evolution of Kenyan contemporary cultural values and expectations. This has over time manifested in the fading of intense traditional customs. The resultant way of life of the urban people in Kenya, or the relatively new 'urban culture' in many ways represents a web of various traditional ways of life and modern ways that predominate these centers.

The growth of Nairobi (and many inland centers) became an integral part of the general re-orientation of the urban system in Kenya, from primarily a string of towns along the coast in 1885, to a system that covered most of present-day Kenya by 1912 (Aseka, 1990). Its functional role in the economic set up of the colony predicated Nairobi as the capital city and resulted in its rapid expansion during the colonial period. Nairobi therefore became a major catchment area of the rural-to-urban migration flow which has dominated since the colonial era. As an urban center, Nairobi continues to provide a melting pot which still serves as a receptacle for thousands of rural migrants whose dilemmas, conflicts and adjustments persistently tear at their structures and social fabrics. Nairobi also serves as a regional center for a number of United Nations bodies and several other multinational organizations, making it a cosmopolitan city. The urban culture in Nairobi therefore has strong influences from both indigenous Kenyans and expatriates who work and live in the city.

A number of reasons brought about the migration of men to industrial towns and urban centers in search of better job opportunities and higher wages (Clough, 1990; Monsted & Walji, 1978). These included land congestion and shortages in some localities as a result of inland settlements, as well as the resulting economic situation which introduced the use of money as a medium for the exchange of available goods and services. Wages earned were normally sent back to the rural areas to provide an extra margin to purchase clothing and manufactured items. The development of housing estates within urban centers soon encouraged the migration of other family members to these centers.

Migrants came to the cities with an overlay of rural tribal tradition and established patterns of doing things, causing urban settlements to become increasingly heterogeneous in ethnic origin. This resulted in what was essentially a new way of life for the migrants. These new trends which entailed all kinds of changes in areas like transportation patterns, population distribution, work habits, housing (Aseka, 1990), called for the necessity to re-socialize rural migrants for adaptation.

The movement of men away from their rural homes meant that they were absent for several months or even years. Women soon found themselves taking up full responsibility for the homes. This resulted in women-headed households. Due to the worsening economic situation in the country, and the fact that sometimes the men did not send money home regularly, the women who lived on marginal pieces of land were forced to take up wage employment. Initially, this comprised of working in the settler farms (Clough, 1990; Monsted & Walji, 1978). Eventually, the migration of whole families into urban centers, coupled with the increased educational opportunities for women, opened up more wage-earning jobs for women outside the home.

Resulting from the political, social and economic changes that Kenya was undergoing, traditional child rearing patterns were affected, particularly in urban areas. Migration and urbanization tended to separate family members from the traditional supportive networks of the extended family. Women were increasingly participating in job opportunities outside the home, and families started seeing themselves as needing alternative methods of socializing and taking care of young children (Kenya Institute of Education, 1991). Pre-school programs therefore emerged as important alternatives for child rearing, and they multiplied rapidly for custodial and socializing purposes as well as to prepare children for formal schooling (Kenya Institute of Education, 1982; 1991).

Although preschool educational programs were started in Kenya in the 1940s, they were only made available to Africans in the late 50s and early 60s. This was mainly as a result of 'wind of change' in the African political climate that had began to

have effect on the education system in Kenya. Together with their demands for independence, Africans also demanded for equal educational opportunities for their children (Kenya Institute of Education, 1982; Otiende, 1990). With a lot of agitation from Africans, the move in educational (and political) circles were eventually increasingly geared towards the training of Africans for leadership in an independent nation.

The provision of preschool education in Kenya, has been mainly the responsibility of local communities, welfare organizations, churches and women's groups. At the government level, the preschool Education Project gave way to the National Center for Early Childhood Education (NACECE) in 1984. In essence, NACECE's role was to develop relevant curricula for preschools, a training program for early childhood personnel, and to conduct research in specific issues related to children. Through the national center, sub-centers at district levels District Centers for Early Childhood Education (DICECE) were formed to address localized issues at grassroots levels.

Although not all children between the ages of three and six are enrolled in preschools, the number has steadily increased from about 300,000 children enrolled in 8,000 schools in 1972, to 850,000 children in 22,000 preschools in 1990 (Kenya Institute of Education, 1991). Statistics from the 1979 population census indicate that there are about 2,247,008 children between the ages of zero and three (Kenya Institute of Education, 1982). Given that improved medical facilities and standards of living have reduced child mortality in Kenya, it can be assumed that by 1982, nearly all these children were within the preschool age bracket (3 to 6 years of age). However, although only about 400,000 or 20% of eligible children were enrolled in preschools in 1982 (Kenya Institute of Education, 1982), the steady increase in enrollment thereafter shows in the enrollment figure of 1990.

CHAPTER IV

Methodology

The main aim of this study was to explore gender role socialization in the natural setting of a preschool educational program within the cultural context prevailing in Nairobi, Kenya. Given this central aim, it was necessary to select a methodology that would allow for an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of gender role socialization among young preschool children in Kenya. Qualitative methods were seen as most appropriate to achieve this aim.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research is an "approach in social sciences that deals with an in-depth description and explanation of processes occurring in local contexts" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 21). Processes central to this definition are referred to as 'human experiences' by Field and Morse (1985), making qualitative research concerned with people's daily experiences and perceptions, activities and behaviors, and the full range of interpersonal interactions and organizational processes. Qualitative methods aim at identifying behaviors by assessing their meaning, and recording the pattern of responses which these behaviors elicit (Field & Morse, 1985; van Maanen, Dabbs, & Faulkner, 1982).

Through qualitative methods, researchers explore society from an emic point of view, which involves "trying to understand life from the perspective of the participants in the setting under study" (Field & Morse, 1985, p. 20). This means that cultural explanations and patterns originate from within the cultural context, rather than from the researcher's perspective. Qualitative studies are carried out in the natural context in which the phenomenon occurs, making the setting an integral part of the study. These methods therefore call for fieldwork experiences that are free from the constraints of

predetermined controls and categories of analysis, yielding information that has depth, openness, and detail.

Qualitative methods can be used to uncover and understand what lies behind phenomena about which little is known. These methods are also suitable for gaining novel and fresh slants into things about which quite a bit is already known (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). While numerous studies have been carried out about different aspects of gender role socialization among preschool children, these have mainly taken place in North American settings. Therefore, although information is available for some cultural contexts, gender role socialization remains unresearched in the Kenyan context. Thus a qualitative method was used to begin to uncover and understand the phenomenon of gender role socialization among Kenyan preschoolers, as well as to provide a Kenyan insight to already available literature.

Qualitative methods can be used to give intricate details of phenomena that are difficult to convey using quantitative methods, and to analyze social contexts and routine social processes of daily life (Lareau, 1987). These details normally include thick descriptions and verbatim quotations (Fetterman, 1989) that give rich and deep descriptions, which would have been difficult to capture in a quantitative research.

There are several different approaches to qualitative research. Determined by the focus of inquiry in this study, an approach was needed that enabled an analytical description of the acquisition of gender roles as a process within the cultural context in which the child lives. Ethnography, was the approach selected for studying this everyday life phenomena of the young child.

Ethnography:

Ethnography is a systematic approach to understanding human behaviors from an emic point of view. It can be described as the process (Spradley, 1979), or the science (Wolcott, 1973), of 'cultural description', which attempts also to interpret

social expressions between people and groups (Berg, 1989). Berg describes ethnography as a practice that places researchers in the midst of whatever it is they are studying, enabling them to examine various phenomena as perceived by the participants and represent these observations as accounts. In this way, ethnography allows the observer to view the phenomena in the context in which it occurs, and gain understanding from the subject's perspective.

A critical assumption guiding ethnography is that every human group that is together for a period of time will influence a culture (Patton, 1990). The diverse nature of culture, results in varying beliefs and practices, making each human group or subgroup unique. Thus, in considering culture and its importance in understanding human groups, ethnography becomes a useful tool for studying human behavior. The assumption that culture is not only unique, but also fundamental to all human groups is important in setting this study in a specific cultural context. The ecological approach of this study removes gender role socialization from isolation, and places it within different social institutions that are influenced by the culture of the wider Kenyan society.

Ethnography is a method that has been characterized by extended fieldwork, of at least one calendar year (Akeroyed, 1984; van Maanen, 1982). However, its use as in short term field experiences is becoming increasingly acceptable especially if these experiences are intense and result in rich and detailed data (Hicks, 1984). Short term field experiences are appropriate for research with a limited scope and diversity of social units studied (Spradley, 1980). Duration can also be shortened by the researcher's knowledge of the native language and culture (Bernard, 1988). When the time period is short, caution must be exercised in order to ensure validity of the data. The fact that the scope of this study was focused on gender role socialization in a selected preschool setting right from the onset, coupled with my knowledge of the local

language and culture, were among the reasons used to plan and eventually undertake a short four-month field experience.

Ethnographic methods that were used for data collection in this study included direct observation, informal interviews, and content analysis. Direct observation is a mode of data collection that involves the continuous monitoring of a subject or group of subjects for a specific period of time. The observed behaviors and words are recorded as accurately as possible during the monitoring period (Bernard, 1988). This technique of data collection involves observation and recording as the only activities on the part of the researcher. Direct observation requires rigorous note-taking using a field notebook and later expansion of these into full reports. In this study, direct observations were made of classroom interactions between the teachers and the preschool children.

The informal interview is a research technique that involves a process of question-answer exploration which is directed by the informant's responses (Bernard, 1988; Spradley, 1979). The researcher comes to, and starts the interview with broad questions that help to keep the interview in focus. Further in-depth questions are usually developed during the actual interview, following the lead of the informant. Bearing this in mind, the researcher must always remember that although he/she defines the focus of the interview, the informants determine the content. Note-taking and/or tape recording are the usual forms of recording interviews. Interviews for this study were done with the preschool teachers that were observed, as well as parents recruited from the larger community.

Content analysis involves making inferences from texts (Bernard, 1988). A variety of texts including fiction, nonfiction, recorded folktales, newspaper or magazine articles and advertisements can be studied using content analysis. The purpose of content analysis is to survey transcripts or texts for words, phrases, descriptors, and terms central to the research topic. Ideally, content analysis involves tagging each word or picture in the text with conceptual labels, then counting these. Bernard (1988)

reviewed a simple and effective analysis involving looking through text for the presence or absence of a single major message defined by the research topic. Content analysis in this study was done on a selected daily newspaper over a period of four months. This analysis was approached with the aim of identifying gender-related patterns that were both explicitly and implicitly addressed in the newspapers.

The articulation of these multiple sources of information strengthened the design used in this study, through the concept of triangulation or "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomena" (Patton, 1990, p. 187). Out of the four types of triangulation identified by Denzin (1978), data triangulation was specifically useful in this study. It involved the use of a variety of data sources as a means of collecting information from different environments. Information from the three environments involved, the family, preschool and wider society were essential, considering the ecological perspective of this study. According to Patton (1990), the combination used in this study of interviews, observations and document analyses are common in much social science fieldwork.

Ethical considerations

This study, like all other ethnographic studies had to contend with ethical and moral issues arising during and out of the study. Ethical issues in ethnography stem from the concern of rights of the members of society being studied (Akeroyd, 1984). Although guidelines have been issued (Bernard, 1988), the ethical responsibility and concerns of each research rest on the researcher.

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Ethical Review Committee of the Faculty of Home Economics at the University of Alberta. In Kenya, the research proposal was reviewed by the Kenya National Council for Science and Technology, and a research permit from the Office of the President was issued thereafter.

Participation in this study was on a completely voluntary basis, and the participants were informed fully of the research goals and methods. Both written and verbal consents were sought from the participating preschool and the interview participants before any information was collected. Confidentiality of the participants throughout the research activities and in subsequent publications was emphasized, and this condition has been met by the use of identification codes as opposed to names.

Data collection

Data for this study were collected from three different sources, namely the family, the preschool and the wider society. The following discussion looks at each of these sources separately. Discussion for each source will commence with entry into the field, nature of the setting or informant, data collection and data analysis.

The family

Information at the family level was collected through informal interviews with parents of young children. Informants for the interviews were recommended to the researcher from within the immediate community. Willing participants who were selected for interviews were briefed on the purpose of the research and on the role they were expected to play as informants. This called for an individual meeting with each participant to answer any questions that they might have, to get their consent for participation (which was verbal in all the cases), and to set up a time and place for the interviews.

Several parents were approached and those who were willing were recruited as informants. This was seen as a criteria to categorize informants who come into daily contact with preschoolers. A total of two male and two female informants were selected for in-depth informal interviews.

Interviews conducted with parents focused on gender activities and expectations of the parents. Several open-ended questions were prepared before entry into the field in order to guide the interview (see Appendix i). However these questions were only used to begin the interview. Subsequent questions were developed during the interviews, and they were directly influenced by the informants' discussion. One interview of 1 to 2 hours duration was conducted with each informant, at a venue that was convenient for them. One of the four interviews was conducted at the preschool, two in the informants' offices, and one interview was conducted in the home of the researcher. Each interview was tape recorded with the consent of the informant. In some instances, interview notes were also taken.

Plans were made to transcribe the tapes that were recorded from the interview as an initial step in the analysis process. Unfortunately, due to poor tape recording in the field, this proved to be a very difficult task. Finally, because direct transcription was ruled out, the researcher listened to the tapes several times and pulled out the key points and phrases that were then used in the analysis.

Analysis of the data included the determination of common patterns that seem to emerge from the interviews. These patterns were decided along their relatedness to gender values and expectations that the parents pointed out. While the patterns did not have to be unanimously agreed upon, patterns were included as long as two or three parents held similar values or expectations.

The preschool

Entry into field was sought on different levels. After getting an official research permit, the researcher contacted the District Center for Early Childhood Education (DICECE) to inform the director of the intended study, and to obtain a list of preschools in Nairobi district that used the national curriculum. A list of preschools which had at least two or three teachers trained through the DICECE training program

was also requested. Using the lists, a preschool was located that not only met these criteria, but one that was also willing to accommodate the whole research process. About four schools were visited before a suitable preschool that was willing to accommodate classroom observations on a daily basis, as well as interviews with two of their teachers was found.

Since the preschool identified was part of a bigger institution, permission to carry out the study had to be approved by the parent institution. To this end, it was required that a written request stating the research topic, and the procedures to be followed in accomplishing the goals of the study be forwarded. A copy of the official research permit was also required. Emphasis was placed on ensuring the confidentiality of the participants, especially the children. After a few days, a written permission was granted, giving the researcher the go ahead to start the observations.

Establishing trust is considered as an essential first step in gaining entry to a group (Field & Morse, 1985; Patton, 1990). Eventually, the credibility of the data is tied directly to the trust established on the onset of the study. In this study, the issue of trust was addressed by discussing with the teachers the purpose of the study as well as the details of the methodology. Being seen as part of the team is always important in establishing trust. On entry into the field, the researcher was introduced to the children as 'Teacher Joyce', and this curbed much of their curiosity about the presence of a stranger in the classrooms.

Selection and nature of the preschool setting

Although a number of preschools were visited, selection of the research site was made in favor of the school that met the following criteria: (a) use of Kenya's National Council for Early Childhood Education curriculum, (b) ease of access to the researcher, and (c) willingness to participate. This preschool also had one teacher who had an early childhood education certificate from DICECE, and one other teacher who

was undertaking her last practicum before graduation. Both teachers were willing to have an observer in their classrooms and also to be interviewed as part of the study. Selection of these two classes for participation was also done on the basis of continuity of age of children in the study (4 to 5 and 5 to 6-year-olds).

The preschool in which this study was conducted is located within a post secondary educational institution, about 20 kilometers south-west of Nairobi city center. Although it was established to cater to the children of those who work in the parent institution, this preschool over time had found itself catering also to the children drawn from the neighboring residential areas. The preschool seems to run relatively independently, making its own daily management decisions, with minimal interference from the parent institution. The parent institution had control over financial management, hiring and paying of the staff, as well as maintaining the physical facilities and other expenditures.

The preschool was situated in a small fenced off area on the far south-east corner of the property boundary. Sprawled right in the middle of the enclosure are the school buildings. The major block houses the head's office, four classrooms and separate bathrooms for boys and girls. The adjacent smaller block houses a fifth classroom, the kitchen, storage facilities, and staff bathrooms. It is important to note that one of the classrooms in the main block, as well as the only classroom in the adjacent block were rooms that were initially intended for other uses. The former was a staff room, while the latter was the school hall. Due to increased enrollment of preschoolers and subsequent need for more teaching space, these rooms were converted into classrooms. Two small playgrounds were situated on the front and back of the buildings. Each grass-covered playground had some outdoor play equipment like swings, climbing bars, slides, and a sand pit. A play house occupied one corner of the front playground.

A population of approximately ninety 2 to 6-year-old children attended this particular preschool. These preschoolers were divided into five classes. The smallest class comprised five 2-year-olds. The other classes, each with an average of twenty-one children, were also grouped by age, 3 to 4-year-olds, 4 to 5-year-olds, and 5 to 6-year-olds. Due to their large number, the 5 to 6-year-olds were divided up into two separate classes.

The preschool was run by a staff of nine females, five of whom were teachers who were fully in charge of the five classes within the school. The school also had a headmistress who was an administrator. The other three staff comprised the support staff whose duties were janitorial in nature. One of these support staff doubled as a cook. For the period during the research, the school had hosted two student teachers on field attachment.

The preschool offers a half day program that starts at 8.30 in the morning and ends at 12.30 p.m. Being an academically oriented program, most of the school day was spent inside the classrooms. A typical school day began with circle time and/or free play until 9.20 a.m. The children would then have two sets of 20-minute academic lessons , involving mathematics, English or news-telling. At least twice a week, the children went out for physical education during one of these lessons. Snack time was between 10 and 10.15 a.m., and the children ate their snack in their classrooms under the supervision of their class teachers. The next hour, between 10.15 and 11.15 a.m., was allocated everyday for outdoor physical activities and play. During this time, the children were allowed to mix freely in the playgrounds, with the teachers taking turns to watch over them. Back indoors at 11.20 a.m., the classes had about 20 minutes of collective teaching or teacher-centered group work. This was followed by another two sets of academic lessons including science, environmental studies, arts and craft, or either mathematics or English (if they had not been done earlier on in the day). School

broke up between 12.20 and 12.30 p.m., and all the teachers stayed with the children outside in the playground until they were collected by their parents or nannies.

About 80 percent of the children left for home at midday, while the remainder stayed on for the afternoon until 4.30 p.m. The preschool had made these after-school care arrangements to cater for the children who could not be picked up immediately after school. The children slept for 2 hours after a school lunch. A different teacher was on duty each day to supervise lunch and stay with the children until all of them were picked up.

Classroom observation and teacher interviews

In the current study, direct observation was used to gather and record information on the activities that took place in the preschool classrooms. Behaviors were recorded throughout the whole period of observation. Observations were carried out on a daily basis, with as little interference in the class activities as possible. At first this was difficult to do because the children were curious about having a new face in the class, but soon they got used to the presence of the researcher and although they seemed to settle back to their usual routine, they never quite forgot that the researcher was there. The researcher alternated between the two classes on a weekly basis, and normally positioned herself in one back corner of the room. Most observation sessions were characterized by rigorous note taking, and these notes were expanded and filled in on weekly basis.

Interviews were also conducted with the two preschool teachers in whose classrooms observations were occurring. The criteria for their selection included (a) their willingness to participate in both observations and interviews, and, (b) early childhood teacher training from DICECE. Interviews were scheduled towards the latter part of the observation stint, to ensure that all the queries that may arise in the observation were dealt with in the interviews, and that the focus of the study would not

alter their behavior. The interviews focused on gender-related activities in the classrooms, with most of the information sought originating from interactions that were observed within each class.

Analysis of data

Data from the classroom observations were analyzed for common themes that related to gender role socialization. Analysis began with substantive coding of the raw data. As they were compared, similarities were found and those codes which clustered together were developed into categories. Each category had its own properties. Where necessary, these categories were further grouped together to form broad categories with similar properties. These categories were then given names that were descriptive and captured the action in the setting.

The wider society

Studying values within a society can be approached from a number of different ways. For the purpose of this study, a daily newspaper was selected to depict gender values and expectations. From the emphasis placed on news items, it was assumed that the newspaper would give a clear and accurate picture of what would be happening within the society.

Content analysis for this study centered on the analysis of one of three available daily newspapers. The choice to analyze a newspaper above other forms of media was based on the assumption that newspapers have a wider coverage of national and international events from a Kenyan perspective, as well as a variety of features. The Nation group of newspapers was selected from the available three dailies because it appeared to be the most widely read paper. Statistics released by this group of newspapers claims that 2.9 million copies of the paper are sold everyday, and at least 72.6% of all newspaper readers read The Daily Nation.

Content analysis was done on an average of six days a week for the entire duration of the field time of 4 months. Drawing from the work of Bernard (1988), a single major message was selected to guide the analysis. The message was asked in a simple question: Which aspects (if any), in the newspapers address gender issues, and what messages do these contain? (see Appendix ii). All articles that contained any gender related messages were selected and noted as data.

Analysis of data form the newspapers was based on common patterns of gender values and expectations that were evident from the papers. All data that were selected from the newspapers were grouped together according to their properties and the issue they addressed. These categories were further combined together where the properties allowed, to form relatively stable patterns of societally held gender values and expectations.

Validity

According to Field and Morse (1985), validity in qualitative research refers to the extent to which the research findings represent reality. In this study, the triangulation of data sources helped to minimize threats to validity, by increasing the credibility of the findings through the involvement of different aspects or levels of the phenomenon being studied. This holistic nature of the information collected can be seen as a measure towards ensuring validity. Researcher bias is another hindrance to validity in qualitative research. This issue was approached by the researcher examining her gender related biases, a process she carried out throughout the research process.

The researcher-as-an-instrument

In qualitative research, the amount and quality of the data depends on the ability and skill of the researcher, as well as the amount of trust established in the setting and the effects of reactions of the participants to the researcher's presence (Field & Morse,

1985; Patton, 1990). Personal changes in the researcher that arise during the course of the research (Patton, 1990) also affect the quality of the data. The depth of the data analysis on the other hand depends on the researcher's predisposition and biases or "sensitivity, perceptivity, informed value judgments, insight and knowledge" (Field & Morse, 1985, pp. 115).

Denzin (1989), concluded that all researchers bring preconceptions and interpretations to the problem being studied. He suggests that "scholars must state beforehand their prior interpretations of the phenomenon being investigated. Unless these meanings and values are clarified, their efforts on subsequent interpretations remain clouded and often misunderstood" (Denzin, 1989, p. 23). It therefore becomes an important principle for the qualitative researcher to examine his/her personal biases that may affect data collection, analysis, and interpretation. In view of this measure of credibility, it became imperative that I as a researcher examine my own biases and experiences of the meaning of gender and gender-related issues.

During my growing years, the gender-based expectations placed on me emphasized the importance of learning traditional feminine roles. Through direct teachings and observations, I learnt household chores like cooking, doing laundry, cleaning the house and taking care of young children. By the time I was about eight years old, I was already helping with simple chores around the house. As I grew older, these chores increased in complexity as well as frequency. Once I could take full charge of specific chores, I was expected to perform my duties diligently and to take full responsibility for my actions. In preparation for the future role of homemaking, it was therefore very important that I learn how to perform tasks well enough to maintain set standards. Different expectations placed on boys emphasized chores that needed considerable physical strength, and those that were related to machines and the yard.

Besides household chores, I was also expected as a girl to stay close to home. Because too much freedom for girls was associated with socially unacceptable behavior

and teenage pregnancies, I was constantly discouraged from wandering too far away from home. Going out for me meant that my parents had to have full details of my company, whereabouts and the activities planned. Boys, on the other hand, were free to come and go as they pleased.

The effects of peer group influence on behavior are usually quite definite in the growing years. Most youths tend to behave or respond in ways that are endorsed or acceptable by the peers with little regard to what the rest of society stands for. My parents were therefore very particular about the company that we children kept. They were particularly concerned by the company that their daughters kept. Being expected to be within reach of the house meant that my parents got to meet my friends, and usually discouraged me from playing with children who were considered to have a bad influence. Because of their freedom of movement, boys experienced less restriction in peer choice.

The high value placed on education by the society, was transmitted to me through my parents. In my home, educational pursuits were encouraged for both girls and boys. In order to ensure a sound educational basis for securing a good job in my later life, my parents set and expected me to achieve high educational standards.

School life was also marked with differential gender expectations. While I cannot remember what went on in the lower levels, the expectations of the teachers and the education system were quite obvious as one advanced into upper primary and secondary school. Through teacher reactions, it was clear that boys, and not girls, were expected to excel in math and sciences. I was particularly good at math and I remember on a number of occasions the teacher raising his eyebrows when I attained very high marks. By the time we were specializing, it did not worry my school administration that there were only 9 girls among about 60 boys in the pure science class, while the technical class (which had just the basic science and technical subjects

like home science for the girls and woodwork for the boys) had about 20 girls and 10 boys.

Through facilities available in single sex schools, it was quite plain to deduce the kind of expectations that the educational system had for the different sexes. While all boys schools (and co-educational schools) had well equipped and enough science facilities, the situation in most all girls schools were different. I attended an all girls school for my advanced level, and even here I saw stereotyped expectations for the students. The school catered for both science and art students. It was however interesting to note that while they had only one class for advanced level sciences, they had two classes for the art students.

Although I was brought up with the practical knowledge of what my traditional feminine role comprised of, I was equally expected to develop and train for a career. It was expected that when I was an adult I would not only get married and look after my family, but would at the same time have and maintain a full time job.

I do not think that I had a particularly exceptional socialization. For the most part, I believe that my experiences were very similar to those of other young girls growing up at the same time. The society emphasized particular socialization trends that it expected the family to adhere to, and practically all families subscribed to these.

Delimitations of the study

This study was limited to a description and analysis of a particular preschool educational program in Nairobi, Kenya. Data collection was further confined to the activities of two classes within this preschool, and the involvement of two preschool teachers. Secondly, although there were at least three different local dailies available in Nairobi, Kenya, this study was also limited to the contents of the Nation group of newspapers- The Daily Nation and The Sunday Nation, between the months of May and August 1993.

In view of the above limitations, caution should be exercised in generalizing the findings to other populations. It is important to bear in mind that the sample of the present study was small and specifically rather than randomly selected.

CHAPTER V

Findings

Qualitative research has the ultimate aim of representing reality in a concise and complete fashion. To this end, a fundamental challenge of this type of research is to make sense of massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns and eventually produce and communicate what the data reveal (Patton, 1990). In the case of ethnographic studies, the resulting products are descriptions of a cultural context, typically comprising an intersperse of the ethnographers' analytical and interpretive comments, in and around descriptive passages and quotations from interviews. In this ethnography, both descriptions and quotations were carefully selected and used to illustrate gender related issues at the micro- and macro- environments, that may influence gender role socialization among preschool children.

The data in this study were subjected to two types of analysis. Data collected from parental interviews and the daily newspaper were analyzed for gender related cultural patterns within the two ecosystems. The patterns that emerged from these analyses contributed the cultural context for this study. Analysis of the data that were collected from classroom observations and interviews with the preschool teachers was aimed at producing specific themes that mark the process through which the preschool teacher might influence gender role socialization among preschoolers.

The description of these patterns and themes was enhanced with the use of descriptions and quotations from the field notes in order to give a sense of what the observed world was really like. In keeping with the conceptual framework developed for this study, the following discussion will commence with a description of gender related patterns at the family level. This will be followed by an in-depth description of themes related to the learning of gender roles within the preschool. Finally, the

influence of gender patterns in the wider society will be discussed through the analysis of a daily newspaper.

Gender related patterns at the family level

Data were collected at the family level through interviews with parents of young children. Four interviews were conducted, one each with two female and two male informants. From the interviews, several familial patterns of gender role socialization emerged. Before looking at in-depth descriptions of these patterns, it is important to look at brief descriptions of the informants. Thereafter, the informants will be referred to using assigned codes: - F1 for the first female, F2 for the second female, and M1 and M2 for the first and second male respectively.

Descriptions of the informants

The first female informant, F1, was a teacher in a nearby primary school where she taught 9-year-old children. F1, who was about 30 years old, was married and had three children ranging from 6 months to 7 years. With only one child of school age, F1, like many other mothers in Nairobi, depended on household help not only to perform house keeping duties, but also to look after the young children while she was out at work. However, once back at home, F1 claimed that she found herself taking over most of the household chores. Born and brought up in a small urban center, F1 moved to live in the city after she married her banker husband. F1 feels that she was still getting used to city life, and admits that she finds her life still 'rural'. Further probe into this 'rural' life revealed it as more inclined towards the traditional way of life.

F2, the second female parent interviewed, was approximately 40 years old with four children aged between 6 and 14 years. F2 was married to a businessman and they lived in a residential estate near the preschool. Also a teacher, F2 taught at a nearby

high school. Complaining of fatigue most evenings, F2 left the household duties basically to her household help during the weekdays. She however confirmed that she had specifically delegated specific household duties to her three older children (2 girls aged 8 and 11, and 1 boy aged 14). F2 reported that she had been brought up in the rural area and had moved to the city on a job posting, a few years before she got married.

The first male respondent, M1, was an administrator at a public government institution. M1 was in his mid-forties and a father of five children aged 7 to 15 years. M1's wife was a seamstress who ran her own business in a busy shopping center not too far from their residence. The couple's first three children were girls and the last two were boys. Like most families, M1 reported that they had a constant household help, although he noted that his daughters did a fair share of work in the home. M1 lived the first twenty years of his life with his birth family in the rural area. After training as a teacher in a training school located in a small urban center, M1 was posted to teach at various schools in different parts of the country. He eventually landed a school administrative posting in Nairobi, a post he has had for the past 10 years.

The last informant for the family interviews was a male tutor at a teacher training college. He was approximately 35 years old. M2 was married with two daughters aged 6 and 8 years old. His wife was an administrative secretary in a large organization in the city. M2 claimed that he was born and raised within the city, and had actually had minimal interaction with his rural home. In fact, he had just started visiting his rural home recently when his parents moved to live there permanently. Because both of them have highly demanding jobs, M2 and his wife depended heavily on their household help and his sister-in-law who lived with them.

The above descriptions give us a general overview of the informants who participated in the familial interviews. Although the descriptions are brief, they serve as a reference point for the ensuing description of gender expectations of families in

Nairobi, Kenya. Further relevant details have been incorporated into the description of gender patterns.

Gender related patterns in Kenyan families

> One's background cannot be left behind, it continues to be with him wherever he goes. (M1)

In this expression, M1 sums up what seems to be perhaps the most powerful general feeling among the informants. According to these informants, the influence of the traditional customs played a big part in the way modern families run their everyday lives. They reported finding themselves assuming gender roles that were traditionally determined. This inclination towards traditional expectations prompted part of the interviews to be directed towards what was viewed as traditional expectations for males and females.

This led to a discussion of various ways in which males and females contributed to society. It was clear from all respondents that different expectations were placed on each gender. According to the male informants, men were supposed to 'provide materially' while women were expected to 'take care of the home'. M2 distinctly categorized traditional expectations of the two genders as 'public and private'. He had this to say:

> When we talk traditionally of masculine and feminine roles, we are actually talking about public versus private roles. . . The man's role was made public because he was judged by how he took care of his family. For the woman, motherhood was her major role . . . no! don't misunderstand me, it was considered a very revered role. The woman had power too, except in their case, it was kept within the home boundary; while she overtly looked like she had no power, covertly, she ran the home. (M2)

This 'public-private' dichotomy was revisited several times during the interviews with M1 and M2. According to these informants, societal approval seems to

be a major driving force for the participation of males in certain activities. M2 refers to male roles and expectations as conducting oneself "so that people would admire your behavior". Teachings that M1 received as a youth also emphasized the importance of public societal approval on male activities. He remembers being taught to "over surpass other people when giving an opinion, in order to get respect for being tough."

In further defining the traditional expectations and roles of males and females, M1 and M2 established a generally acceptable pattern of leadership, provider and protector roles labeled as male. Such roles, especially leadership, called for distinct attributes in a man's character. According to M1, men were traditionally supposed to be tough in order to take care of others. He remembers distinctly being told by his father that he had to learn to speak fluently and carefully, so that people could listen to him. This way he could command more authority and respect from everybody, including his family members.

F1 and F2 in their interviews confirmed the expectation of leadership qualities among men. However, the main focus of their discussion seem to fall on the traditional expectation placed on women. Much as they reported that it was natural for them to be expected to perform these roles, F1 and F2 felt that the current situation was "very difficult for most women."

Right from their youth, women already "feel the pressure to perform duties like caring for the young and other household duties. . . and we had to learn to do them well" (F1). Responsibility for the home and family therefore became the overarching expectation of women. F2 sums up these expectations in the following quotation:

> You have to learn at a very early age how to take care of the younger children in the home, because it was up to you as a girl to help your mother. I remember when my mother would be away from home, I would be responsible for cooking and making sure that everything else went well. (F2)

When asked what she meant by "making sure that everything went well", F2 talked of ensuring that there was enough firewood and water in the home, and that the young children had been fed. However, F2 reiterated that gender expectations on the youth were flexible under certain conditions. This fact came up in a later interview with M1 who confirmed role flexibility as socially acceptable, "as long as the conditions are convincing enough" (M1). According to F2, one such condition was the one she found herself in, being the only girl among 8 boys. Although she remembers being expected to participate in most chores around the home, her brothers were not spared.

> Because I was the only girl in the home, my brothers had to help me to do certain things. . . they helped to collect firewood, but they were not supposed to cook. I did the cooking with my mother. (F2)
>
> Yes, the society accepted this because there was no one else to do these duties with me. (F2)

F1 had a different story to tell. She remembers growing up without her father (who worked in the city, and visited only occasionally). According to her experiences, she saw her mother virtually single-handedly look after the family. F1 reports that her mother seemed responsible for everything that went on in the home. Although she cannot say for sure whether her father provided any money to the running of the home, F1 remembers frequently hearing her mother complain about lacking money. She knows that in the later years, whatever support there might have been stopped coming in when her father apparently took on a second wife. F1 concluded that she learnt to be responsible for her home and the welfare of her family from direct observation of her mother and the expectations placed on her as the eldest in a family of four girls.

In their contribution to the traditional expectations placed on women, the male informants in this research talked of similar roles and duties. While M2 less specifically commented that women were expected to behave in a certain way, M1 went on to elaborate these ways. Over and above being expected to nurture the children,

women were also expected to provide for the affectionate role in the home. The following quotations which come out of the interview with M1 illustrate this.

> In actual sense, the person who actually cares for the welfare, the welfare of the family, is the woman. (M1)
>
> Therefore, the role of women is to provide happiness and the emotional aspect. (M1)

According to the informants, these major traditional expectations are to some degree evident in the modern Kenyan society. Although they agree that the influence is greater in the rural areas, they reported that the public verses private dichotomy still holds in respect to particular roles even in the relatively different circumstances found within the city. M2 describes the current situation in Nairobi as 'fluid', with generous amounts of flow of gender expectations in both directions. This view was not completely endorsed by the other informants, who acknowledged the fluid nature of expectations, but reported that the flow was socially visible in only one direction, with more females having to take on traditionally male roles. They thought that the reverse situation of males assuming traditionally feminine roles was a rare one.

One expectation that was generally agreed upon was that the man was still the provider of the home. Although all informants individually acknowledged the increase of women in the labor market, there seemed to be a common underlying assertion that women were "helping to make ends meet." In fact one of the female informants directly addressed this assertion:

> You know, nowadays we have to help each other, that is why you find a lot of women working. (F2)

For the average Kenyan family, it seemed quite natural for both the man and woman to work outside the home. According to the participants of this research, this was inevitable because of the economic situation in the country that has resulted in high

consumer prices. The female respondents added that, for most women with established careers, the question of quitting their jobs after marriage just never came up. While he acknowledges the economic importance of both partners working out of the home, M2 considers this as a major contributing factor to dysfunctional families in Kenya. His main argument was that the result of this situation in some homes led to the leadership role being contested. M2 claimed that in such a home, the man ended up having no role to play in the home, leaving the woman to take up most duties. "Such a man, who ends up feeling 'shut out' of his home, normally resorts to alcoholism" (M2).

Much as both men and women may be working outside the home, the women were in most cases expected to participate in household responsibilities in the evenings and over weekends. M1 related what he claimed to be a common scenario in most homes, where the couple comes in from work and while the man sits and reads the newspaper, the woman is expected to embark on cleaning the house and getting the meal ready. F1's illustration of this from a feminine point of view is no different.

> Like you see, when it comes to the welfare of the children, and the work in the house, . . . a woman is expected to carry out that duty, to see that everything is in order whether she is working or not. (F1)

Although the era of 'household help' is in force, women still maintain their position as chief homemakers. It is important at this point to note that 'household help' comprises a person, usually a woman or a young girl, providing housekeeping and child care for a family in exchange for accommodation and minimum wage. Already the mere fact that household help is comprised of females itself says a lot in terms of who is expected to carry out housekeeping duties. The women employer of these helpers continue to hold the overall responsibility for running their homes, a duty that sometimes involves helping out with the actual chores. F1, talking on this issue, describes women as an 'overworked' gender.

> Women used to just stay at home, but these days, things have changed. Both are going out as breadwinners. But women, they are overworked because they have to do housework, and then they work outside the homes. (F1)
>
> Yes, you find that women still do housework even if they have a maid, but at least that woman has a lot of free time compared to her counterpart who may have no maid. (F1)

In her interview, F2 approached this issue in terms of having or not having time to socialize.

> Men have a lot of socializing that they do. You see, because they are free after work, they socialize by drinking out. But women, they are always tied down. You come home from work and you realize that you have still a lot of work in the house to do. (F2)

Turning to gender expectations of young children, the informants felt that preschoolers were too young to expect anything from. They explained further that, since these children were still too young to help around the home, they did not place much gender related expectations on them. F1 had the following to say about them:

> Oh, that is a very young age you are talking about. Like my children, all they seem to do is play outside with their friends. I don't expect them to help around the house at all because they are still too young. When they grow bigger, yes, I will expect them to participate in some house work. (F1)

The informants with older children discussed several expectations that they had for these older boys and girls. While this is beyond this current study, it is worth noting that from the interviews conducted, children in urban Kenyan families seem to be expected to perform certain household chores by the time they are on average, 8 years old. At this point, the duties are assigned randomly to both girls and boys. However, as the children grow older and into their teenage years, the nature of expectations seem to change and become more gender oriented.

Learning gender roles within the preschool

Several observations were made of classroom interactions between teachers and preschool children that may have contributed to gender role socialization. The presentation of these observations will be illustrated by descriptions as well as quotations from interviews with the teachers. Each illustrative vignette is identified by a code number indicating the particular classroom involved (A for the 4 to 5-year-old class, and B for the 5 to 6-year-old class), and the particular day that the observation was made (the date and the month). An example of a typical code may be A/5/7, which means that the observation was made in class A (4 to 5-year-olds) on the 5th of July 1993. The children were coded by their first initials (e.g. N) and their gender (for example, N/b for a boy or M/g for a girl).

The codes also differentiate the teachers (TA and TB for the two classes, A and B respectively). The following are brief descriptions of the two teachers who participated in this study. TA was a single woman of approximately 26 years. Brought up in the rural area, TA had only recently moved into the city to train as a preschool teacher. Although she was in her last year of training, TA had been exposed to preschool teaching on a continuous basis throughout her two year training. Within the city, TA lived with her extended family. TA reported that whenever possible, she engaged in a number of homemaking tasks at her city home in conjunction with her employed cousin and the household help. TA also admitted that she does miss her rural life and travels to visit as often as once or twice a month.

TB, the other participating preschool teacher, was a married woman of about 35 years, who had lived all her life in the city. TB reported that she had taught in preschools since attaining her teaching certificate six years ago. She had worked in the present preschool for four years. TB had four children aged between 7 and 15 years. In her interview, TB claimed that she did not have household help because she felt that her children were old enough to help around the house. Since her only daughter was

away at boarding school, TB delegated traditionally feminine stereotyped chores to her sons.

Although the circumstances that surround, and those that precede interactions may differ, rendering them unique in all respects, several common themes emerged from the overall classroom observations. These themes have thus been used as a basis for describing all the gender related interactions within the observed classrooms. In order to fully envision these descriptions, the physical layout of the classrooms, the overall classroom atmosphere as well as the teachers' general expectations of all the children will be briefly recaptured.

Classroom layout, atmosphere and teachers' general expectations

The physical layout of the two classrooms was virtually identical, therefore, only one general description will be given. The rooms were approximately 15 feet by 12 feet with one door at the front right hand corner, that opened onto a corridor. The wall at the front of the classes was covered by a chalkboard. Whatever wall space was left up front was filled with charts containing the alphabet, numbers, colors and shapes. The whole length of the left wall was made up of several large windows with frames starting about 2 feet above the floor level. These two feet of wall served as additional space for pinning up the children's' work. Small pictures, including those of various animals and birds were pasted on the windows. The back wall in both classes had a 3-foot wide soft board running across the whole width, starting about 3 feet from the ground. The board and the wall above it were used for putting up additional alphabetical and number charts, multiplication tables, illustrations of concepts that were constantly referred to like the family, common fruits, domestic and farm animals, as well as samples of children's work. Most of the lower section of the back wall was occupied by built-in cupboards for storing classroom supplies. The right side wall had a row of small windows at the top, while the rest of the wall was occupied with a shelf

containing small individually marked shelves for the children to store their personal belongings.

The teachers had developed several centers within each classroom. The most important and often used centers were the work centers. Each class had three such centers, made up of several small tables clustered together. Each child was assigned a particular place to sit at one of these centers by the teachers. The criteria for seat assignment was the teacher's evaluation of the child's ability to perform academic tasks. Children with similar abilities were grouped together, and the teachers tended to assign different learning experiences to the children at each work center. For example, in class A the teacher would ask one group of children to write letters, another to write out their names, while the third one would be asked to draw and color (A/15/6). Another example drawn from class B involves the children in one group engaged in a dictation exercise, while the second group is writing out the alphabet and the third group molding the alphabet with plasticine (B/14/7). These centers were situated several feet from the two side and back walls of the classrooms. The other work center was the teacher's desk which was situated at the front left corner of the room. For the most part, however, the teachers hardly used this work center, except to store some of their personal things. On the contrary, the teachers sat among the children during all classroom interactions.

Other centers within the classrooms were play centers. One such area was the house center situated in both cases at the back right corner of the rooms. This center was made up of several recycled household items that had been collected over the years. These items included kitchen utensils, some household linen, some old clothes, and a few dolls. The shop center was in both cases situated against the back wall, with the top of the built-in cupboard serving as the shop counter. The stock for the shops comprised of empty recycled boxes and tins and other packaging brought in on a

regular basis by the children. In both 'shops' the shelf was overflowing with these 'consumer goods'.

Another center, the nature center was also situated at the back of the class. This consisted of a table full of a collection of interesting natural things. This collection ranged from food items to rocks and stones. Children who opted to play with blocks or bottle tops did so in an empty space at the middle section of each classroom. The blocks and bottle tops were stored in both cases at the front right hand corner behind the door.

The teachers set the pace and determined the general trend in which classroom activities flowed. They thus created a specific classroom atmosphere in which learning was expected to take place. The pre-school teachers who were observed in this study showed general expectations that resulted in similar classroom atmospheres. The following discussion will outline some of these expectations.

After a few minutes in each class, it was obvious that the teachers determined the activities that took place in the classrooms. Following a previously outlined time table, the teachers steered the children from one activity to the next throughout the day. With the exception of free play, the teachers also determined how the activities were to be carried out and by whom. On the other hand, the children were expected to participate in various ways in all learning activities within the classroom.

One of the ways in which the children were expected to participate was in group or chorus responses and recitations. Over and over again, the teachers were heard asking the children to chant the alphabet or numbers, read wall charts and even answer specific questions together. The following two examples illustrate this:

> **22**- T shows the children flash cards with different letters and together the class call out the name of the letter and the sound. "K/b come and sit here." T pulls his chair right to the front of the class (his attention had been caught by something across the room, he was not reading); "F/b I'll throw you out through that window," to F/b who was busy looking out, "M/b you are not opening your mouth." (A/5/7)

71- T points to different parts of her body and asks the children to name them together. Chorus. T talks about how the body is made up of the foods we eat and then moves on to talk about foods. She asks the children to name a few foods they know. Children shout the answers together. (B/21/6)

The children in classes A and B were also expected to engage in predominantly teacher-centered activities. These activities were determined by the weekly class time table that was developed by the class teacher. They included activities in language development, number work, science and the environment, art and crafts, free-play, as well as outdoor physical play activities. With the exception of the latter two activities, the teachers took the central part in all the others. They decided the content of each lesson, initiated and constantly consulted with the children throughout the duration of the activities and finally, evaluated each child's performance. Therefore, the teachers spent most of the class time in close contact with all the children.

The presence of a class time table made the school day very structured. Activities were assigned to specific times on the schedule, and as best as they could, the teachers kept to these times. Both teachers were frequently heard calling out to the children to work quickly so that they could get their work done within the allotted time. In a bid to get the children to concentrate on their work, the teachers insisted on order in the classrooms. They expected the children to be obedient and well-behaved at all times.

Class structure

Apart from the general expectations of the teachers, there are several other factors that may have influenced the nature of interaction between the teachers and the children. These factors are more-or-less related to the class structure, especially the student population. It is important to approach the description of the classroom interactions bearing these factors in mind because they may in their own respects have influenced these interactions.

The first factor is the population structure of the class, and the fact that both classes did not have an equal number of boys and girls. In class A, where there were a total number of 24 children, 17 of them were boys and 7 of them were girls. In class B, 7 boys and 11 girls made up the 18 children in the class. This difference in numbers can be assumed as an influencing factor in the frequency of teacher interaction with each of the gender. In a group with more boys, for example, the general inclination would be for more interaction with boys than with girls. This is considered the same in the case of a group that has a majority of girls. Therefore, the assumption that the frequent interactions with either gender may have been increased by a higher percentage of a particular gender in the class cannot be overruled. This assumption played a significant part in the analysis of the data.

Secondly, the physical size and maturity of the children is another important characteristic of class structure. The blend between nature and nurture does play an important part in determining both the physical and mental development of the preschoolers. From observations made in the two classes, it was obvious that the preschoolers were at different levels in these developmental areas. These differences can be assumed to contribute significantly to the classroom interactions that may have taken place. This class characteristic was recognized early in the analysis stage and was particularly useful during the initial determination of interactions that were gender related.

A third important factor that was taken into consideration is the personality of the children. Among other things, personality determines one's reactions to a particular situation or experience. This reaction in turn affects subsequent interactions with other people. The variety of personalities in the children observed is best described as a continuum that ranged from very shy and quiet, to outgoing and confident. Depending on where the child fell along the continuum, it can be assumed that their interaction with the teacher took different forms. The bold and outgoing children attracted attention to

themselves and were always under the teacher's scrutiny. On the other hand, the shy and quiet children were happier just blending into the crowd and it took extra effort from the teacher that they did not go unnoticed. That such interactions may differ on grounds other than gender was kept in mind during the analysis.

For the most part, a combination of these factors prevailed in the classroom interactions. Illustrations drawn from the observations demonstrate the effect of these on teacher-children interactions. The first example demonstrates TA's response to R/g, a petite, quiet and shy girl. The second involves L/g, an outgoing girl in class B who is physically well developed, and classified by TB as being among the academically advanced children in the class.

> **27**- "Okay line up everybody we go to wash our hands." "Is there anyone disturbing R/g? R/g is there anyone disturbing you?" T calls from the other side of the class. "No" (nobody was actually disturbing her, she was walking past the other children to get to the front of the line). "I said R/g is always to stand in front . . .," TA calls out. (A/6/7)

> **77**- Group singing. L/g very busy playing and giggling instead of singing. "L/g !!" L/g continues to play. ". . . from today, I want you to be sitting near me. Come and sit here." L/g moves. (B/23/6)

Gender related classroom interactions

According to social learning theorists, gender role socialization comprises the learning of gender associated behavior that occurs through differential treatment, and a system of rewards and punishments for appropriate and inappropriate behaviors, as well as modeling and behavior imitation. In practice, this mode of learning can be seen to constitute a complex interweaving of rewards and punishments used to encourage or discourage gender appropriate or inappropriate behaviors, that are made explicit through differential treatment, modeling and interactions. Several classroom interactions observed in this study can be classified under this mode of learning.

As may be expected, different forms of human interaction took place throughout each school day. Due to the teacher-centered nature of the classroom activities, most of these interactions took place between the teachers and individual children or groups of children. Although several observations established the fact that teachers interact differentially with preschoolers, only some interactions clearly depicted gender as the basic influence. Factors like personality and ability of the individual children, as well as class structure, could be among other reasons for differential interaction.

Within the classrooms observed, differential gender-based interactions were manifested in a number of different ways. The observations have been compounded and presented here under common themes. The following themes were developed for direct gender role socialization: differential gender expectation, differential reprimanding, and direct reference to gender and socially acceptable gender roles and expectations.

Theme 1: Differential gender expectations.

Patterns of differential interaction attributed to the gender of the children clearly showed that the teachers placed different expectations on the children based on their gender. These expectations served as important influences for some of the classroom interactions. Generally the teachers seemed to have different expectations for the girls and boys, and so they reacted differently to each gender. While it may be argued that differential expectations may be a result of individual differences among the children, this study called for critical consideration of interactions which were generalized to a group of children with something in common, in this case gender.

One of the basic expectations that the teachers seemed to hold differentially was that of very high standards in the ability of the children to perform particular tasks and activities. Clearly, the two teachers expected differential performance levels in a number of classroom activities. They expected very high academic, as well as oral (as

in singing) performance from the girls. On the part of the boys, the teachers' expectations of high performance were inclined towards physical activities. According to TB, "Girls like to read, they like books and cutting also. Boys, they like drawing and construction; very few boys will go to the reading corner to take the flash cards and books to read." The following incidence illustrate this.

> **21**- After some warm-up exercises, TA asks children to make two lines- one for girls and another for boys. In order to get an even number in each line TA has to move some boys to line up with the girls. "I want two boys who can run very, very fast." All children put up their hands and shout, "T me; T me!" "I said two boys not two girls." TA then picks on two boys and sends them to the other end of the field. Children then engage in a running game, competing against each other up to the two boys on the other side. (A/5/7)
>
> **33**- M/g (table C) is working on letter 'd'; "T, I don't know how to do it (draw a duck)," she calls. TA replies "Try, I know you can do it," as she moves on to A/b. "A/b what letter is this? 'f'; now I want you to write 'f' in each of these boxes." TA holds his hand and helps him to write one letter 'f'. "T, I can't," M/g calls out again. "I want you to try," TA calls back, moves on to R/b, holds his hand, and helps him to write the letter 'g' twice. TA looks up and calls out to M/g "M/g you don't know how to draw a duck, draw how you know, it will be a nice duck." M/g now gives up and just sits. After sometime, TA realizes that M/g is now just sitting. She goes over to her and says, "You don't know how to draw a duck, okay I will show you." T holds M/g's hand and helps her to draw the first duck and then tells her to continue. (A/7/7)
>
> **54-** Children are busy drawing pictorial news. "T can you spell for me 'road'," L/g asks. TB starts to spell, halfway, C/g joins her. TB stops and tells L/g "Let C/g spell it for you, she knows." C/g spells the word correctly. "Okay L/g spell it I hear!". "r-o-a-d." "Good!" TB says. A little later, C/g spells word 'umbrella' for L/g. "Good C/g, " TB calls out. (B/8/6)
>
> **56-** B/g asks across to TB "T the word 'television'." "Ask C/g," TB calls back. B/g asks C/g, who spells it out for her correctly. (B/8/6)
>
> **97**- After completing their writing and having it looked at by TB, 2 girls begin singing at their tables. Soon they have moved to the center of the class and are joined by another group of about 4 girls. TB just looks at them and continues looking at the other children's work. Boys who have finished just sit back and watch the girls who are now arranging themselves into rows and conducting themselves like choir, complete with a song leader. (B/31/6)

When it came to activities that were not strictly 'academic', like free play, the teachers seem to expect the preschoolers to engage in sex-typed preferences. Having already been exposed to sex-typed behaviors at home, the children seemed to opt for activities that were sex-typed whenever they were allowed a free choice. The girls would always play at the house center and sometimes at the shop corner. Playing different roles, they would engage in home-making activities like cooking, cleaning and tidying up the house, looking after babies and occasionally shopping for household items at the local shop. At times, the girls rode a bus together to the market to buy vegetables.

The boys on the other hand played at constructing cars, aeroplanes and bridges with blocks, or molding the same with plasticine. On one occasion, two boys interestingly molded a man lounging on a couch watching television. The teachers' expectations were that the children would naturally participate in gender-related activities. According to TB:

> You find that in many ways, boys behave differently from girls. For example, when they are playing, the girls are more 'mothers', and the boys are more 'fathers'. (TB)

On a few rare occasions, the younger 4-5 year old boys and girls (class A) participated in 'cross-gender' play, although these ventures were very short lived. Such behavior variation was never witnessed among the 5-6 year olds. As a matter of fact, the teachers sometimes verbally encouraged the children to continue engaging in sex-typed activities. Two illustrations, one from each class demonstrate this:

> **6**- It is time for free play, and most of the boys are at the blocks constructing houses and cars, other boys at shop center buying and selling. The girls are at the house center, except for two of them at the blocks, constructing the different rooms of a house. TA who is quietly observing different children turns to a new boy who was just standing by, "Come, I will show you what to do." She leads the boy from the shop center to the blocks and demonstrates how to build a house, then leaves him there to continue with construction. (A/16/6)

> **65**- It is free play and the girls are at the house and shop centers, the boys are molding with plasticine. TB comments that today nobody wanted to play with the blocks because she has put out new plasticine. Soon a few girls move over to where TB is mixing paint and offer to help. TB allows them and this attracts the rest of the girls. "Why do all of you want to mix paint when one starts?" TB asks. "B/g, W/g, where have you been? Some of you go to the house center." Girls disperse reluctantly to the house and shop area leaving about 4 of them at the paints. (B/10/6)

However, during the teacher interviews, they pointed out that they encouraged cross-gender play. TA had the following to say:

> You see, the boys, they don't like to play with dolls, they don't like skipping the ropes, and then you can see that the boys are not interested. So what we do is to give them tasks, we can say today, the boys are going to skip the ropes, so even if they don't like, we just encourage them, that leads them to share activities. (TA)

Leadership and responsibility was another area where differential expectation was observed. These qualities seem to have been expected more of the boys than of the girls. Where the teachers needed to have one or two children to take some responsibility, like distributing pencils or papers to the class, a boy was normally given the duty. If however a second child was required to help the boy, it almost always was a girl. This seem to be the case all the time although it was the girls who always offered to take responsibility of most classroom duties. This was observed mainly in classroom A. One such time when TA wanted some books distributed to a group of children, she gave the following instructions: "V/b, give group A some books to read. E/g help V/b to give out the books" (A/16/6).

Even when the teacher was the one responsible for performing the major task, any contribution from a girl was referred to as 'helping'. For example at one time when TA was collecting books, B/g kept asking insistently whether she could collect the pencils. After some time, TA replied "Okay B/g you can help me to collect the pencils" (A/17/6).

Interestingly responsibility that was directly related to learning and activities like singing was given to the girls. In one example, the children in class B were sitting on the floor in the middle of the classroom preparing to read the alphabet out aloud from one of the wall charts. TB called out "Who will point out to the alphabet for the rest of the class? B/g you know your work, take the long stick and do it." B/g stands up and points out to the alphabet with a long stick for the rest of the children to read (B/24/6; B/29/6; B/14/7). Another academic responsibility expected of the girls was to fill out the weather chart.

> **89**- Class B has just had a discussion about the weather and learned how to fill out a new weather chart. Then TB calls on C/g to fill out the chart. "I want you children to remember to fill the chart every morning and the children who stay over in the afternoon, don't forget to do the afternoon part. L/g don't forget to do it every afternoon after you have woken up," TB announces. (B/28/6)

Cleaning and tidying up after classroom activities was high on the teachers' expectations of the preschoolers. Although all children were expected to participate in this exercise, the teachers' differential expectations about the nature and extent of participation was obvious. Two observations which were made at different times on the same day (A/6/7) and stemmed from similar circumstances, demonstrate this fact through the different responses from TA. Both incidents involved collecting work papers after writing exercises. In the first example, K/b was asked to collect the papers. His efforts received the following response from TA. She shakes her head and asks as she takes the papers and arranges them neatly, "How have you collected these papers?" Later on after another exercise, B/g insisting that it was now her turn to collect the papers is finally granted permission by TA. On handing the papers to the teacher, B/g is asked "How have you arranged these, take them back and arrange them nicely!".

When it came to more complex cleaning tasks, the teachers set high standards for the preschool girls. They expected the girls to take part in the actual cleaning up tasks, and to be thorough in their performance. Meanwhile, the boys got away with basic tidying up and putting things away.

> **9**- "D/g come I send you, E/g come I send you," TA calls. "Go to the bathroom, wet a towel, wring it out and then come and wipe the table for me." (The table had been used by all the children for painting). The girls run off to the bathroom. "Wipe the table very clean," TA tells them on their return. TA moves on to reading table, and although she has asked the class to tidy up, she takes over the collection of books from the boys while girls are left to clean the table and collect flash cards on their own. (A/16/6)

> **84**- It is cleaning up time after an art exercise and the children are told to wash brushes and clean the tables. Several children collect brushes and go out to the bathroom to wash them (7 girls & 2 boys). The rest of the girls run and get rugs and start wiping paint from the tables. Once back from the bathroom, the girls start arranging the artwork neatly out to dry. TB calls out, "L/g, go and get the mop." L/g rushes out and gets it, "T here." TB points out to some paint on the floor and says, "Do this job." L/g proceeds to mop the paint. By now, the boys are just moving around playfully. T/b points out to TB, (but makes no attempt to wipe), "T, here, there is paint!" TB asks one of the girls to wipe it. Meanwhile, the other girls bring their aprons to the TB, who asks them to fold them. "Okay, I want to see who can fold all these aprons nicely," TB challenges them. The girls proceed to fold all the aprons that were used by the children. They are soon joined by other girls. (B/25/6)

From a number of interactions, it became quite clear that the teachers' expectations were for the girls to learn to perform traditional female tasks well. While the boys' gender-related tasks were not scrutinized for perfection, the girls were continually expected to do traditionally feminine things to perfection. This expectation was mainly observed among the 5 to 6-year-olds.

> **99**- Free play. Girls are at shop and house center playing at cooking, eating and shopping. L/g drops some plates while serving food for her family. "Look a careless mother, breaking everything in the house!" TB exclaims. L/g just laughs, picks them up and continues to play. "Today I am not hearing people asking the prices," TB calls out. Girls respond by talking out loudly, "How much is this? how much is. . .!" "T L/g is drinking beer!" the girls at the house center shout. "Is she at a party?" TB asks. TB later cautions the girls "And today if you do not arrange the house nicely, I will be very annoyed. You used to always make the house so neat, I don't know what is happening to you girls nowadays." Boys are meanwhile divided between the plasticine (molding

a man sleeping on a sofa, a car, a telephone) and the blocks. "T/b what is that - a car?" TB asks one of the boys at the blocks. "Yes," T/b replies. He and his friend C/b are busy driving their structures around the floor. (B/12/7)
- "Okay, tidy up. I want you to arrange the shop very nicely. I also want you to arrange the house very nicely, the sitting room, the bedroom, the kitchen." Girls take their time arranging, boys are sent off to the bathroom. (B/12/7)

Theme 2: Differential reprimanding.

Within the classrooms, the teachers constantly called for order, so as to maintain a smooth flow of activities. The teachers' expectations were that the children would be orderly in carrying out all their activities within the classrooms. Sometimes these calls for order were addressed to the whole class as a unit. It was not uncommon for example to hear the teacher shout "keep quiet" to no child in particular. However, there were times when the teacher paid attention to specific children who were engaged in disruptive or undesirable behavior. Occasionally, these behaviors solicited more than a verbal reprimand from the teachers. It was keenly noted that the teachers reprimanded the girls in a different way from the boys, even when the preceding behaviors were similar. It is interesting to note that, while the boys did not necessarily misbehave more than the girls, they aroused relatively harsher responses from the teachers.

3- TA explaining next activity to be done in groups (according to the different tables where the children sit). TA remarks to one girl who is not paying attention "S/g, you are playing!!" S/g stops playing. TA proceeds to the next table. K/b busy playing at another table. TA walks over and smacks the boy on his hand, "Why are you playing?" TA asks. (A/15/6)

7- Story-telling. Children volunteer to tell stories to the rest of the class by either putting up their hands or being selected by the rest of the class. TA keeps order in the class. "I want everyone else to keep quiet and listen. Those who are playing with chairs, I want you to stop that and listen." "B/g you are not listening!" T gets up and taps M/b on the leg, "You are not listening!" (A/16/6)

Verbal reprimands were addressed to both boys and girls for different disruptive behavior. When they were addressed to boys, the main focus was negative.

For example "F/b that is being a bad boy" (A/17/6). Contrary to this, verbal reprimands directed to girls were aimed at the teachers' displeasure of the behavior. This can be illustrated by phrases like "B/g I am not happy with you" (A/7/7) or "And today, if you do not arrange the house nicely, I will be very annoyed" (B/12/7). Interestingly, in one interaction two children, a girl and a boy were reprimanded very differently for similar undesirable behaviors.

> **11**- The children are reciting a poem as they line up to go to the bathroom. B/g standing out of line deep in thoughts. "B/g can you say the poem alone." B/g recites the whole poem. "Okay, now go to the line." Meanwhile, F/b is fidgeting and playing while in line, "F/b can you stop that, that is being a bad boy!" (A/16/6)

Theme 3: Direct reference to gender and socially acceptable gender roles and expectations.

Constant repetition of and reference to gender not only ensures that one does not forget what sex they are, but it also acts as a continual reminder of the social boundaries attached to each gender. Phrases like "boys don't . . ." or " good girls always . . ." are examples of how the children are reminded that they are either boys or girls, and each of these two categories of people has certain acceptable and unacceptable behaviors.

From the observations, it was obvious that the teachers made frequent references to the gender of the children. One constantly repeated example was when the children went to the bathroom. Although they were allowed to go to the bathrooms individually, there were times between two activities when the children would go out together. In class A, usually the boys lined up behind the girls and they went out together as a class. In her class, TB would always send the boys off to the bathroom, and on their return, she would send the girls. The children were therefore constantly reminded and made aware of their gender.

The teachers also used gender to label some of the behaviors the children engaged in. Creating awareness of gender distinction served as a cue that was picked by the children, who used it to distinguish between themselves. The following illustrations, show the teachers direct reference to gender and expected behaviors, as well as the usage of gender distinctions among the children.

> **64**- It is circle time and the children are sitting on the floor. Activities include singing, hygiene checkup (nails, ears, teeth, handkerchiefs etc. around the circle by the T). When she gets to S/g she says, "S/g I told you to be sitting nicely like a girl, not like a boy." "Yes T," S/g replies and covers her legs with her uniform. (B/10/6)

> **59**- After quiet time, TB calls on boys to go to the bathroom. "T look, L/g is a boy," S/g shouts out laughing. (L/g had stood up with the boys). "L/g are you a boy? You don't know the difference between boys and girls?" TB asks. She then turns to the boys and tell them "Okay boys walk quietly, I want to see if you are better than the girls" While the girls await their turn, a discussion ensues. It starts off by one girl shouting to the teacher, "T S/g is sleeping." The teacher who is busy preparing for the next activity asks "Woo, *mama* are you asleep?" This question brings about a discussion between the girls and the teacher about who can be called *mama* in the class and who cannot. The boys come back and are told to sit on the floor. "Okay girls I want to see whether you are better than the boys; L/g please if you run. . .!!" (B/8/6)

In the process of referring directly to the gender of the children, the teachers generated some amount of competition between the children. In some situations, gender competition was addressed very explicitly. In reaction to this, individual children or groups of boys or girls tried to outdo each other at various activities. The following examples illustrate this:

> **45**- Children are engaged in story- or news-telling while they wait for their snack. One girl volunteers and goes up to the front of the class to tell her story. Once she is done, TA asks for the next volunteer "A boy this time. We want a boy." Silence, no volunteers. "Boys if you are defeated by the girls you will not go out for break." At this, 2 boys put up their hands. "Okay N/b come and tell us your story or news. N/b opts to tell news instead of a story. (A/19/7)

> **100**- TB comment to the girls as the boys run out to the bathroom singing, "See, the boys, they have defeated you." Trying to outdo the boys, the girls later run off to the bathroom singing at the top of their

voices. When they get back to the classroom, T exclaims "Oh, so you *mamas* have defeated the *babas* !!" "Yes," the girls shout triumphantly. (B/12/7)

105- The boys go out singing 'we are marching'. "Girls, you hear the boys singing. . !" After the boys come into class, the girls run out singing the same song at the top of their voices. T just smiles at them when they come in. (B/14/7)

Perhaps one of the most direct reference to gender was a classroom discussion of the family in class B (5 to 6 year olds). The discussion was on the structure of the family and the roles played by the family members. It was interesting to note that during the discussion, the children contributed sex-typed answers to the expectations of each family member, contributions which the teacher proceeded to confirm. The following texts illustrate two discussions that took place.

63- TB to children sitting on the floor "Okay, today we are going to talk about the 'family'. Who is the biggest in the family?" "Daddy" (chorus). "What does he do?" Children shout out an array of roles including: goes to the office, work, buys food, comes home, sits, drinks tea. TB concludes "So daddy is the biggest in the family. Who is next?" "Mummy" (chorus). "What does Mummy do?" Answers: cooking, washing clothes, washing baby and napkins, putting children to bed, working in the house, everything. TB asks "Who is next?" "Brother" (chorus). "What is the work of the brother?" Answers include: playing football, going to school, reading books. "And next?" "Sister" (chorus). "What does the sister do?" "Playing with dolls, playing with friends, reading books, going to school". TB finally asks "What about the baby?" Children shout out answers "Staying at home, crying, sleeping, eating". Then TB asks the children to name some of their family members. (B/9/6)

67- Children are reciting a few poems together. One is on the family:

This is my father, short and stout;
This is my mother, who puts me to bed;
This is my brother, as tall as you can see;
This is my sister, with the doll on her knees;
And this is my baby, still a long way to go.

"Remember, who did I say is the biggest in the family?" TB asks. Children chorus "Father." "Then who?" TB asks. "Mother." "Then?" "Brother." "Sister." "Baby." "Okay now I want you to take these papers and go and draw a family - first father, mother, brother, sister and then baby. And table A, label your family. Those who can on table B, also label your family." Each child then draws members of a family, some label, some have it labeled by the teacher. They then color their pictures. (B/10/6)

The wider society

Gender norms and values of any given society can be studied in a number of ways and using a variety of data. For the purpose of this study, a local daily newspaper, The Daily Nation, was analyzed in order to find out what gender related attributes and expectations the Kenyan society had for its people. Although a first glance at a few copies of The Daily Nation might not expose any gender related issues, looking consistently at a number of issues of the paper revealed gender patterns. Some of these gender patterns are exposed through the factual reports of happenings within the country. This takes into consideration both the nature and the emphasis placed on the different reports appearing in the paper. Other gender patterns are elaborated in the type of reflective feature items in the newspaper- mainly found in the special weekly sections. One would therefore consider the Nation group of newspapers as both reflecting and also influencing the concept of gender in the Kenyan society.

First, I will present a brief description of the local daily newspaper 'The Daily Nation' (DN), and its sister Sunday paper 'The Sunday Nation' (SN). This general overview of what is contained in the paper will be followed by an analysis of the paper for gender related news and feature articles. It is important to note that the following analysis is limited to publications of these newspapers for the months of May through August 1993.

The DN, a newspaper that claims to 'serve the nation' is an English daily that is printed and distributed everyday between Monday and Saturday. This paper which measured approximately 30cm by 40cm averaged 24 to 28 pages on most early week days. On the latter part of the week (Thursday, Friday and Saturday) the newspaper had an average of 32 pages.

The DN reported 7 to 9 pages of national political news which occupied at least the first five and the back pages of the paper. For the most part, the major headline news was political in nature. A news commentary normally shared a page with the

editorial. Other regular features included one page of letters to the editor, one page with news from around Africa, and at least two pages of world news. Business and finance, a regular feature, was allocated 1 to 2 pages somewhere near the middle of the newspaper. Towards the back of the newspaper, at least two pages were devoted daily to leisure activities and entertainment notices. Nation classified advertisements and notices were also located at the back of the newspaper and they took from between 4 to 9 pages except on Saturday, when they occupied only two pages. Regular sports were normally featured on three pages right at the back of the newspaper. One other thing that made up the general newspaper was the 2 to 4 pages of regular (but not necessarily daily) special reports that would feature big current and important local events or issues.

With the exception of Thursday, the DN had a special weekly supplement appearing on all the other days. Each weekly special dealt with a broad category that affects the life of the readers or some special on-going event. The DN on Monday came with the 'Sports Desk', a four page pull-out that provided a more in-depth look at a variety of sporting issues and activities. The Tuesday's 'Business Week' supplement looked at the contribution of big corporations to the economic, industrial, financial and agricultural development of the country. The 'Wednesday Magazine' consisted of eight feature packed pages. Basically there were two major articles, one of which was a personal profile as well as review articles on farming, medicine and theater. 'Dear Amani' a personal problem corner was also a feature of the magazine. The Friday 'Weekender Magazine' was a complete weekend entertainment guide that totaled 12 pull-out pages. This magazine featured reviews in a variety of subjects like music, theater, films, hobbies, and the art scene. Also featured were two lengthy articles, one of which was a personal profile of a political figure. On Saturdays, Nation Education had a two page feature called 'Blackboard' filled up with education news and views.

The sister Sunday paper, the SN averaged 20 pages with an additional 16 page pull-out magazine 'Lifestyle'. The main Sunday paper devoted 6 to 7 pages to national political and social news items. Sunday after Sunday, the headlines screamed out political or related news, while the social issues were given comparatively less prominence and allocated smaller spaces. The same trend of emphasis on political issues was also followed in the news analysis and commentaries, review articles as well as special reports, each of which was a regular 1 to 2 page feature in the paper. The rest of the newspaper consisted of 1 to 2 pages of regulars like African and world news, letters to the editor, entertainment guide and classified advertisements. Sports news was covered on at least three pages at the back of the newspaper.

The Sunday 'Lifestyle' 16 page supplement tackled a variety of topics under different categories. The main categories included motoring news, a 'people' column which featured the life profile of a variety of people, as well as entertainment news of both local and international entertainers. The 'Surgeon's Diary', stories with a medical touch, and 'Whispers' a humorous column based on the lifestyle of the common Kenyan family were also regular features in Lifestyle. 'Femalestyle', was a regular column which comprised of two full pages of articles on relationships, physical beauty tips and looking good and culinary art. Sometimes, 'Femalestyle' featured articles on women and law as well as child care issues. 'Youngstyle' was another column geared to specific readership and it was made up of two pages of folktales, puzzles and other activities for young people.

Gender issues in the wider society

Leadership and power is the first area on the Kenyan national scene that shows social expectations that are differentiated by gender. This is especially evident in the political sphere. National political news is what sells newspapers in Kenya, therefore it is extensively covered by The Daily Nation. Coverage ranges from events that have

taken place in different parts of the country to reports on parliamentary proceedings, as well as statements made by different political parties or individual politicians. For the most part, both elected or appointed civil and national leadership positions are occupied by men, making male leaders the main news emphasis. Male leadership was not only restricted to politics, but it was also evident in other leadership positions that called for national following. This was illustrated throughout the months of May and July 1993, when the national teachers union constantly urged a national teachers strike. The union executive offices were all held by men. The offices in the national workers union, which represents all unionized Kenyan workers, were also held by men (DN, Tuesday 13th July 1993, p. 3).

Women's political leadership, on the other hand, was rarely reported, as compared to their male counterparts who appeared daily. Perhaps this might be attributed to the fact that there are comparatively fewer women in leadership positions. In one report that showed a differentiation in expectations for leadership, out of a council of 33 members, 10 women were elected into top posts in one political party. However, with the exception of one woman, who was elected to coordinate the women's' affairs within the party, the other nine were elected as deputies for male leaders (DN, Wednesday, 7th July 1993, p. 13). The profile report of the secretary general of yet another political party featured in a Wednesday Magazine, reads under the heading "What ___'s 'right-hand' woman thinks about politics" (DN, Wednesday, 11th August 1993, p. IV-Wednesday Magazine).

In non-political organizations, women stood out as leaders in certain distinct categories of life. Female leadership was evident in welfare-related positions and organizations especially those related to children, families and women in society. The Daily Nation of Friday 21st May 1993 carries a report on the woman director of the children's department in the Ministry of Home Affairs and National Heritage, appealing for the improvement of social conditions which may be directly sustaining the

increasing number of children in the streets, AIDS orphans, and children who accompany mothers to jail (p. 4).

Analysis of the business pages leaves one wondering what part, if any, women play in the economy of the country. First, the business news was concentrated on big corporations, which according to the reports were headed and run by men. Day after day, the business and finance pages were dominated by men in high ranking positions. When featured at all, women were depicted as participants in small-time trades and businesses like exporting of crafts (DN, Wednesday 21st July 1993, p. 12). Women were, however, constantly advised to diversify into other forms of non-traditional exports as well as improve on their export products (DN, Wednesday, 12th July 1993, p. 12; DN, Wednesday, 21st July 1993, p. 12). When it came to finances, women were continually considered at par with young upcoming entrepreneurs in the informal sector. They were seen to be in constant need of financial help to set up and run "small scale businesses", as well as in need of introduction to and education on how to use the banking system (DN, Friday 21st May 1993, p. 12).

The effect that some prominent members of a society, for example, politicians, successful business entrepreneurs and professionals, can have on the society, especially on the youth, can be quite profound. The positions of these people or role models usually has a very important part to play in a youth's career choice. Being able to identify with a person who has filled a certain position can be an eye-opening experience to the range of possible careers. Gender has frequently been considered as a factor in the identification process. Because they represent real life situations, newspaper articles and photographs can therefore be a source of career information for the youth. From the newspapers analyzed, the availability of male and female role models has to be appreciated. Although the variety of roles played by each gender was quite diverse, it was not a surprise that in keeping with the preceding discussion, the leadership and decision making roles were dominated by male models. Women too

made their contribution to leadership models by occupying different managerial as well as high ranking legal positions like judges of the high court and resident magistrates. However, these category of women were few and the higher proportion of female role models appeared in different service positions.

Features on social life were also covered on a daily basis. This would normally include reports of social events, as well as issues that influence the social aspects of life, such as social norms, values and social order. This category of articles depicted the differential and distinct positions and participation of males and females in several areas of family and social life.

In the social sphere, women were portrayed as the key contributors to the affective domain. Various pictures and texts showed women as concerned about the welfare of others, especially the poor and needy, the homeless and the underprivileged. Women's professional organizations organized free medical check-up clinics for poor women (DN, Saturday 22nd May 1993, p. 5). Women donated linen (DN, Friday 21st May 1993, p. 5) and wheelchairs (DN, Saturday 12th June 1993, p. 2) to the needy and participated in providing services for destitute children (DN, Friday 13th August 1993, p. 4; DN, 8th August 1993, p. 5; DN, Saturday 24th July 1993, p. 3). The concept of concern for the welfare of others is best illustrated by a story carried out in the Sunday Nation of the 8th of August about a former teacher (female) who had established a home for street children (p. 13).

Women are expected to perform the care giving and nurturing duties for the family. This message was very much evident in the advertisements of products that are directly linked with such roles. For example, women were used to advertise antiseptic solutions (DN, Tuesday 27th July 1993, p. 5), washing powder (DN, Thursday 1st July 1993, p. 22), and cooking products among others (DN, Thursday 20th May 1993, p. 32). Even as victims of eviction by landlords, women were shown in the process of cooking a meal for their families out in the open (DN, Monday 24th May 1993, p. 4).

The aggressor-victim dichotomy was perhaps the most illustrated gender position in the Daily and Sunday Nation between May and August 1993. Ranging across a number of diverse articles, females of different ages were shown as victims of aggressive males in the society. Sexual exploitation in the form of rape was frequently reported in the newspapers, and the victims ranged from a three year old girl (DN, Thursday 22nd July 1993, p. 3) to a young girl of nineteen years (DN, Wednesday 21st July 1993, p. 3). In one incident, the victim was an 8 month pregnant woman (SN, 18th July 1993, p. 3). Several cases were also reported where rapists ended up murdering their rape victims (for example, DN, Friday 11th June 1993, p. 4). In the some of the cases, the aggressors were men who held respectable positions in the society, for example a pastor (DN, Wednesday 21st July 1993, p. 3), a senior chief (DN, Wednesday 11th August 1993, p. 24), and a clinical officer (DN, Tuesday 10th August 1993, p. 2).

The strength of women showed best when they gathered together as a group. Single-handedly, most women are portrayed as giving up quite easily their fight for a good cause. An example that appeared on the Tuesday 10th August 1993 about a mother who gave up pursuing the rape of her 12 year old daughter on the grounds of expense (p. 2). Some women individually criticized (letters to the editor - mailbox) easy jail sentences that rapists got away with, especially for defiling small children (DN, Saturday 3rd July 1993, p7), while others called for confinement to lunatic asylum for rapists (DN, Saturday 24th July 1993, p. 7). However, the loudest call for justice that involved not only words but also action was heard when women united under the auspices of the Kenya Anti-Rape Organization. Led by a strong willed secretary general, this group lobbied for support from the masses and female professionals (DN, Friday 13th August 1993, p. 14), camped at police stations demanding the arrest of rapists (DN, Wednesday 11th August 1993 p. 24) and spoke against inadequate jail sentences (DN, Wednesday 21st July 1993, p. 3).

In some reports, men appeared to be defending their kind, especially when it came to rape. A male criminologist decried the castration call made by the Kenya Anti-Rape Organization claiming that most rape victims were not innocent, but contributed to their own violation (DN, Saturday 3rd July 1993, p. 3). Yet another male, in his letter to the editor, acknowledged some rape incidence at the local university, but argued that little could be done for the victims. He concluded his letter thus: "Two rape incidents in a semester in a college with thousands of students should not, therefore, be given a prominence they do not deserve" (DN, Friday 9th July 1993, p. 7).

Women were also portrayed as defenseless and victims of men's selfish ways and wrath. A woman victim had her body burnt with a hot rod by her husband for infidelity (DN, Friday 13th August 1993, p. 3), while another had her genitalia irreparably mutilated by her husband (DN, Saturday 17th July 1993, p. 3). Another woman was even reported to have been beaten and stripped naked by clansmen because of failing to attend a clan meeting (DN, Thursday 10th June 1993, p. 3). Surprisingly, these treatments were lashed out at the women on the basis of alleged rather than confirmed accusations. In none of the cases were the men shown to have paused to listen to the women.

Sports coverage featured both national and international sports. Although the coverage included a variety of sporting activities, it reported in greater detail the two most popular sporting activities in the country- soccer and track and field athletics. Other sports that are featured regularly include boxing, basketball, motor racing, rugby and golf. Women in sports were featured in lawn tennis, golf, volleyball and in their attempts to organize soccer teams. It is interesting to note that the coaches for most of the national women's teams are male. Although it could be assumed that women like all competitors put their best into a game, definitive words such as 'super girls' were notably used to refer to a women's team that had performed exceptionally well in a

tournament (DN, Monday 17th May 1993, p. 11). No parallel words were used for good sportsmen.

Punctuating the news items and articles throughout the newspapers are advertisements for different goods and services. Advertisements appeared on virtually all pages of the newspapers and occupied mainly the bottom half of the page. The advertisements ranged in sizes and sometimes they even took up a full page. A good number of advertisements could be said to be neutral because they dealt with goods and services that were not gender-specific and/or they are not gender biased. However some advertisements were distinctly gender biased like women featured in hair care products (DN, Friday 21st May 1993, p. 5), beauty products (DN, Wednesday 21st July 1993 p. 14), or food related advertisements (SN, 30th May 1993, p. 5). Men distinctly featured in finance related advertisements like those selling banking facilities (DN, Monday 26th July 1993, p. 12), or traveler's cheques (DN, Tuesday 25th May 1993, p. 12). One insurance advertisement that featured both male and female models had three men keenly participating in an operation and one lady assisting(DN, Wednesday 26th May 1993, p. 13).

Classified advertisements and general notices were noted to be neutral in wording and appearance except for job notices within the classified. Listed under men were job opportunities like machine operator, security guards, sewing machine or typewriter technician, accounts clerks and other managerial positions. Under women , jobs like salesladies, secretary, receptionists cum telephone operators, and other domestic related positions were listed. Jobs listed under general included managerial training or market training positions, teachers, drivers, different assistant jobs and training positions.

Summary of findings

The findings of this study indicated the presence of gender role values and expectations within the three environments involved - the family, the preschool, and the wider society. These prevailing values and expectations were bound to influence the gender role socialization of young children. Assuming that the first three years of life are spent within the family, familial values and expectations are significant in the early socializing patterns that the young are exposed to. Not only are these patterns important because they determine the level of gender development of the preschooler on enrollment at school, they also continue in his/her life on a daily basis, even while attending preschool. In this study, gender patterns within the family involved leadership and responsibility in different aspects of family life. The general expectation was for the males to lead and hold responsibility for the overall family structure, while the females were expected to hold welfare and caregiving responsibilities.

Coming to preschool from such an environment already delineated young children as being well aware of what was expected of each gender. From the findings however, the gender role values and expectations within the preschool environment were somewhat different from those of the home. Leadership, responsibility and excellence were the key values and expectations in the preschool. In this environment, these expectations were different for the boys and girls. For the boys, leadership expectations were placed on physical and general classroom activities, while for the girls, they were placed on academic and caretaking tasks.

On the other hand, gender-related values and expectations within the wider society indicated that leadership, responsibility and power formed the basis for gender issues. Males led and held responsibility in the more instrumental domain, while the females were seen in the similar positions in the affective domain. Males were also depicted to be dominant or have power over females in a number of different ways.

Although the findings of the different environments were described separately, it is imperative that they are viewed as differentially interacting with each other in accordance to the ecological framework. Thus the values and expectations within each of the individual environments must be seen as a part of the larger human ecosystem in which the young child develops. A look at these values and expectation within a holistic picture shows varying influences on gender role socialization, and portrays different degrees of continuity and discontinuity in the gender-related patterns. The emerging social context in which gender role socialization of preschool children in Nairobi, Kenya took place, is considered in the next chapter.

Apart from the social context, the findings of this study also present the process of gender role socialization within the preschool environment. This process was described using concepts of social learning theory. Differential treatment, reinforcement, and model imitation were the most frequently used learning processes. Differential treatment and reinforcement was displayed in several different ways including the expectation and encouragement of the children to engage in different activities according to their gender. Gender expectations were also reinforced through discussions on family structure and the roles of each family members. Although most of their models were contained within the family environment, the preschool encouraged the development of gender-related behaviors by providing a learning atmosphere that stimulated the imitation of gendered activities.

CHAPTER VI

Discussion and Implications

This exploratory study was focused on gender role socialization of young children in a preschool educational setting in Nairobi, Kenya. The two major areas of interest were the social context in which gender role socialization took place, and the process through which the young children learned their gender roles. Findings from this study revealed some of the gender role values and expectations that influenced gender development among the preschoolers. They also showed some of the processes through which gender values and expectations were taught to young children within the preschool environment.

The process of gender role socialization is dependent on the prevailing social context for values and expectations to be taught and learned. This context labels specific values and expectations for each gender. In this study it was assumed that as children interact with their environment, they assimilate prevailing gender meanings, beliefs and values which they in turn use to gain an understanding of and participate in 'their world' (Milner, 1983). The use of an ecological perspective set this study within its social context, allowing for the exploration of values and expectations from different social environments that may influence gender role socialization of preschool children. The gender role values and expectations of the immediate environment or microsystem (in this case, the family and the preschool), were examined within the broader culture in which they are embedded. This approach allowed for the recognition of a two-way interaction between the broader culture, or the macrosystem, and the microsystem.

Within the social context described by the gender-related values and expectations, the actual process of gender role socialization was examined from the social learning perspective. This approach to learning emphasizes the importance of influences within the environment that contribute to the learning of social behavior. In

this study, the process of gender role socialization was studied within the preschool environment. The focal point was interactions between the preschool teacher and the young children.

This discussion looks at major values and expectations that emerged from the different environments in this study as they contributed to the social context in which gender role socialization of preschool children took place. This will be followed by a discussion of the process of gender role socialization within the preschool educational setting. Finally, the implications of this study will be discussed.

The social context

Data from parental interviews revealed that gender-related values and expectations were significant in determining gendered roles for different family members. Men were expected to be leaders in the home, having authority and commanding respect from both the members of the family and the community. Being aggressive and tough was also a part of this expectation of leadership. Women, on the other hand were expected to be nurturing and affective, taking care of the home environment and the welfare of the family. Although a current expectation of Kenyan families is for both men and women to work for wages outside the home, the men continue to be seen as providers, while women are regarded as helpers, merely supplementing the husband's wage.

Data collected in the preschool environment yielded a set of gender-related values and expectations that influenced the process of gender role socialization within the preschool. From the preschool data, it became obvious that there were differential expectations placed on the preschool children, determined by their gender. Boys were expected to play leading roles in classroom responsibilities. They were equally expected to be more active and to excel in physical activities. Girls, on the other hand, were expected to excel academically, be modest, and to be helpers rather than leaders in

classroom responsibilities. Preschool teachers also expected girls to take the responsibility of home-related tasks like cleaning and to perform these tasks to meet high standards. Traditional stereotyped gender values and expectations were also taught directly to the preschool children. These expectations were further reinforced through the availability of gendered activities in the classrooms, and the expectation that the children would engage in traditional gender activities.

The use of the newspaper media in this study helped to reveal gender values and expectations of the wider society that might influence those of the microsystems. These values and expectations included men being portrayed as instrumental leaders and decision makers, as well as providers on a national scale. Men were also portrayed as aggressive and having power over women. Women were portrayed as involved in social welfare and as leaders in the affective domain. For the women who were in leadership positions other than in the affective domain, they seemed to be valued in their roles as deputies, working with men bosses. Women were equally seen as powerless and passive, giving up easily.

Clearly, the major findings of this study indicate some similarities and differences in gender role values and expectations in the three social environments studied. Such a picture depicts continuity and, in some instances, discontinuity of gender-related values and expectations across the society. An initial question that comes to mind is why there should emerge a discrepancy in these values and expectations. What meaning would this discrepancy have in terms of the state of the society and the culture of its people? Would this be an indication of values and expectations at different transitional levels?

An attempt to answer these questions calls for the recognition of social environments, as ecological systems that have continuous reciprocal relations with each other (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). Through these multidirectional interactions, different environments within the human ecosystem constantly influence

each other, sometimes very differently. In effect, this to and fro movement in interactions can be seen to create a state of constant change or transition in the social environments. This transition state can in no way be considered uniform for all environments because of the unique nature and impact of each interaction. This state may eventually result in different levels of continuity and change in values and expectations related to gender. For example, a rise in the inflation rate at the level of the wider society might result in family members increasing their time in wage-related activities thus affecting the quality and quantity of time spent in social interaction with their young children, and the familial patterns of gender role socialization. Children in these settings may begin to see both mothers and fathers as role models for workers inside and outside the home. Within the preschool environment, a rise in inflation may result in increase in school fees in order to defray the added expenses. This might result in access to preschool for fewer children and thus a differential gender socialization for those who no longer have access to the preschool environment.

If indeed this study puts forward a claim that the prevailing social context in Nairobi, Kenya is in a state of transition as concerns gender-related values and expectations, what evidence can it present to support this claim? The following discussion examines evidence of transition in the major gender-related values and expectations that emerged from this study. This evidence is also expected to endorse the concept of interacting influences between the family, preschool, and wider environments in Kenya.

The first gender-related value and expectation that will be considered is that of men as leaders and public figures. This expectation was evident in the roles that were played by men in the family and in the wider society. For the most part, this expectation can be traced back to patriarchal nature of traditional ethnic societies in Kenya, where men were considered the heads of homes and families, as well as major decision makers in the public context of the community (Kenyatta, 1938). Therefore,

the extension of the men's leadership roles from the family to the community was socially acceptable, in fact even expected. Because women were married into new homes, and sometimes even new localities, they were regarded as visitors who never really rose to public ranks within the community. Women who rose to significant public positions in traditional societies were older women who were expected to have completed their private roles within the home.

The influence of traditional customs show strongly in leadership expectations among urban parents interviewed in this study. This finding may be a result of the continued flow of migrants from the rural to urban centers, as well as links with their rural homes, that urban families continue to keep alive. At the level of the wider society, newspaper evidence also show traditional gender expectations of leadership. Here, however, is evidence of transition in expectations. While most newspaper accounts showed men in the major leadership positions, women are beginning to appear in various public roles. Contrary to the traditional 'public women', these current women are making their debut at relatively early ages, in fact, during child bearing years. Notice should however be taken that the social expectation of public leadership among women is but an extension of their private roles into the community, which involves them as leaders in affective and welfare domains.

It is important at this point to elaborate on a difference that arises between the gender expectation of men as heads of 'homes and families', and the one that reveals women as heads of the 'house'. Kenyans recognize a traditional difference in the meaning of the terms 'home' and 'house'. The term 'home' means the traditional and ancestral place of origin that remains fixed for men. Women are expected to change their 'home' upon marriage. 'Home' for the majority of Kenyan families means the place of paternal ancestral origin. Since men determine the identity for the rest of the family, they are expected to be leaders.

On the other hand, the 'house', which means the physical structure and the duties of maintaining the daily living of the family, have traditionally been seen as the responsibility of women and the source of their leadership. Women were therefore expected to be responsible for the caretaking and nurturing aspects of the family. This expectation was evident in both the parent interviews and media analysis in this study. It determined the duties that most women performed around the home. Much as the family members interviewed referred to the presence of a household help, women were still expected to be in charge of the house. Since the majority of household help comprises women and young girls, this expectation is further supported. This expectation, which can be traced to traditional expectations of women among Kenyan ethnic groups (Kenyatta, 1938), appears to be undergoing little change. Change in this traditional expectation of women's responsibility and leadership in the family surfaces through the additional expectation that women should supplement the income of men by taking on paid employment outside the home. For a lot of women within the family and societal environments, wage employment seems to have brought in a new dimension to their household contribution. This new dimension involved the participation of women in at least two full-time and highly demanding jobs - bread-winning, as well as caretaking.

From the findings in the preschool, it seems that the expectations placed on leadership are defined differently. In this case, leadership and responsibility that stem out of academic work are expected from girls. On the other hand, those that pertain to physical activities and provision are expected of boys. Here we see values and expectations that are placed on boys as a continuity of those in the family and wider environment, where provision and protection are male roles. In this respect, the boys are being socialized to fit into already established social roles. What will happen to the expectation of girls' high academic performance at the family and societal levels? Are the traditional expectations of caretaking and nurturing within these environments too

strong to allow for change? Or is there lack of appropriate role models? Whatever the case, there is a definite difference in expectations of the family and the wider society and those of the preschool.

The definition of appropriate gender characteristics and behaviors generally include a differentiation of power or a dominant-subordinate relationship (Abu-Laban, et al. 1992; Miller, 1976; Evans, 1988). Miller (1976) suggests that the characteristics of a dominant-subordinate relationship always places the dominant group in control of the lesser group. This dominant group determines the norms of a culture, and they designate for themselves the highly valued activities. Miller further indicates that the provision of less valued services was relegated to the subordinates. According to Abu-Laban, McDaniel and Sydie (1992), there is clear evidence in literature that for the most part, the dominant position has been occupied by the male gender. Evans (1988) argues that the patrilineal nature of most societies contributes to the general subservience to masculinity. In such societies, all the importance attached to the males contributes to their socialization into dominant positions.

The differential expectation of leadership and responsibilities can be defined as a differentiation of power according to gender. This expectation thus lends itself well to the concept of dominance and subordination. Findings suggest that men, within both the family and the wider society, are expected to be leaders with different responsibilities and types of power. This dominant position is also exhibited in the findings by aggressive behavior on the part of men. Women, on the other hand are portrayed as victims of aggression, powerless, and in lower positions as deputies or helping to make ends meet. The same pattern of dominance and subordination shows up in the preschool expectations of some of the responsibilities assigned to boys and girls.

For the most part, the preschool seems to reinforce gender expectations that are similar to those of the family and wider society. One exception is that of leadership,

which was reinforced in both boys and girls, in different activities. This expectation seems to go contrary to that which is portrayed by the wider society, which portrays both academic- and position-related leadership as a male domain, and welfare and affective-related leadership as female.

The process of gender role socialization in the preschool

Through the process of gender role socialization, cultural values and expectations regarding the roles of males and females are taught and learned. According to social learning theory, the process of learning gender roles results from a combination of differential treatment, reinforcement and model imitation of gender appropriate behavior (Crosbie-Burnett & Lewis, 1993; Mischel, 1970). The findings of this study support suggestions that teachers reinforce differential social behavior among boys and girls (Fagot et al., 1985). They also support observations made by Richer (1979) that teachers provide cues that encourage children to notice female-male differences. Through these findings, the interactions between the preschool teachers and the children illustrated several ways in which modes of learning social behavior may have contributed to gender role socialization within the classrooms. The extent of their contribution is the focus of the following discussion.

The central role played by the preschool teachers in the classroom activities greatly influences the process of gender role socialization that may occur therein. By determining and providing specific learning resources, the teachers' influence the choice of classroom activities available for the children. After all, it is expected that the children would choose from what is available. This is an example of how teachers are seen as encouraging gendered choices among the children. While some of the learning resources in both the classes could be considered neutral, those available for free play were associated with traditional gender stereotypes. In theory this meant that the

choices available were for the children to engage in were either traditionally acceptable same-sex activities, or cross-gender activities.

Social learning theorists would expect children faced with such a choice to choose activities through a combination of model imitation and reinforcement. Coming to preschool from the family context described earlier, these children would have observed models engaged in traditionally expected gender roles and the positive consequences of their behaviors. Therefore the children would be expected to model behavior within the classroom that was observed at home. Teachers, in providing a gendered atmosphere and holding expectations for children to imitate particular activities, reinforce socialization of the preschoolers into their gender roles.

Findings also showed the reinforcement of gender roles among the preschool children. The preschool teachers reinforced particular behaviors among the children according their expectations for each gender, primarily toward traditional gender activities. Yet not all the expectations of preschool teachers were the same as those of the family and the wider society. For example, although expectations for excellence were clearly differentiated for the children according to gender, both boys and girls were expected to excel. Girls were expected to excel in the academic and areas of oral presentation, and the boys were expected to do well in physical activities. In distributing tasks and encouraging behavior along these gendered lines, the teachers were in effect reinforcing the children to develop differentially. Nonetheless, this aspect of socialization could be seen as a small example of a change in traditional gender socialization.

Although the teachers said that they encouraged cross-gender behavior, in practice they continued to endorse some traditional gender stereotypes. By silently accepting the children's choice of activities, the preschool teachers allowed the children to continue restricting themselves to gender related activities. For teachers who were otherwise quick to correct and guide children, silence could be assumed to mean

consent. In fact, social learning theorists would categorize this behavior on the part of the teachers as approval of or reinforcement for the children to continue to perform these activities.

Apart from free choice activities, the teachers also reinforced traditional gender expectations through some specific tasks that they assigned to the children. The findings suggest that the teachers expected the children, especially the girls to have already learned homemaking activities like cleaning up. Not only did they constantly ask the girls to perform these tasks, they also set standards. Thus such expectations get reinforced in the young preschool girls. The reinforcement of these roles especially for the girls suggest a continuity of gender-related values and expectations similar to those held by the family and wider society for their female members.

Leadership and responsibility were other areas in which the teacher showed differential expectations of the two genders. While this expectation was extended to the girls in academic related areas, the boys were encouraged to take responsible roles in other areas of classroom activities. In these other situations, girls were constantly seen as assistants to either the boys or the teacher.

While they may not necessarily reinforce differential behavior, differential treatment according to gender sensitizes one to become aware of their gender. The awareness created then becomes a catalyst for viewing one gender as different from the other, in terms of aspects including roles and expectations. In fact the whole issue of sensitizing the young children about their gender was very vividly obvious in the two classes observed. When the teachers created competition among the children, or discussed familial gender roles, they reminded them that they were different in terms of gender.

The preschool teachers can thus be said to contribute towards the gender role socialization of the young children, in several processes that can be identified with social learning theory. The teachers reinforced gender socialization among the children

through gender-related expectations on their behaviors, as well as differential treatment of the children. Reinforcement was also evident through constant reference to social gender roles of males and females.

Implications of this study for professionals working with young children

Preschool teachers and those who develop preschool curriculum play an increasingly important part in the socialization of Kenyan children. The findings of this study accent the need for the training of these professionals to include an emphasis on an examination their personal gender biases and the effects these might have on the socialization of young children. Reflective examination would involve a critical appraisal of ones own gender socialization and the resultant values and expectations that they would eventually bring into the world of the preschooler. The interaction between these biases and the constantly evolving values and expectations of the wider society is a crucial aspect of the appraisal. Coming to terms with ones own biases may contribute towards making healthy adjustments to accommodate the changing way of life. Once this bridge has been crossed, then a path opens up for working towards the conscious development of programs for young children and their teachers that will be aimed at presenting opportunities for each child to achieve his/her highest potential, regardless of gender.

The findings of this study also have implications for the preschool curriculum. These findings suggest the development of a curriculum that is gender sensitive. Such a curriculum should be tailored towards the young child as an individual, each with his/her own potential. This would mean a shift from the current teacher-centered curriculum to a more child-centered curriculum. An evaluation of the current teaching and learning resources that make up the different activity centers within the classrooms, is a strongly recommended starting point.

Concluding remarks

This study concludes with the acknowledgment that the preschool contributed in several ways to the gender role socialization of young children. The role of the family in this process was established as providing a social context that acts as an initial and on-going influence for gender-related reference for preschool children. Reciprocal interactions of the wider society with both the family and the preschool manifested as gender values and expectations at different stages in a state of cultural transition. The influence of these on gender role socialization at the preschool were suggested. However, in reality, this study reveals only a small part of a larger picture.

Although this study was designed to answer particular questions, its undertaking has generated questions and suggestions that seem crucial for gaining further comprehensive understanding of gender role socialization. Critical research questions that rose from this study include: What is the role of peers in gender role socialization? What contribution does the 'household help' make towards the gender role socialization of the young child under her care? What are the effects of specific transitional trends on gender role values and expectations of particular environments and what are the resultant implications on the gender socialization of the young child? For example, with educational and career expectations requiring women to be away from families for extended periods of time, what effects would this temporary absence have on familial values and expectations of the spouse? What implications would this possible redefinition of values and expectations have on young children in such families? Lastly, because of the contrast expected between a rural and an urban social context, a comparative study of gender role socialization in these two environments also seems to promise valuable information.

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Appendix i

Interview Questions

Set One - Parents

1. What does being a man/woman mean to you?

2. What are some of the major factors that influenced your meaning of the word man/woman?

3. How did each of these factors play a part in influencing your meaning? (take each factor that has been stated in Q2 above).

4. What are some of the things that you experienced during your growing up stage that helped you come to your meaning of being a man/woman?

5. What are some of the things that you are expected to do as a man/woman?

6. How prepared do you feel to carry out these tasks?

7. What are some of your views of the opposite sex?

Set Two - for preschool teachers only

1. What do you see as important to teach young children?

2. Are there things that you find yourself doing with or for specific children in the classroom?

3. What do you notice boys /girls like to do?.

(More questions will be formulated after the initial descriptive observations in the classroom and transcription of the answers to the first set of questions).

Appendix ii

Content Analysis of Daily Newspapers

General Questions

1. Which content item in the selected texts addresses any aspect of gender role norms and values?

2. What are the assumptions that underlie these items?

3. What is the nature of each item?

4. What meanings are attached to each item?

5. What importance has been attached to each item? (in terms of positioning in the newspaper and on the page, as well as the characteristics of the title).

6. What is the frequency of items on males/females?